

LIMEHOUSE DOCK

EDGAR P. JACOBS

THE YELLOW "M"

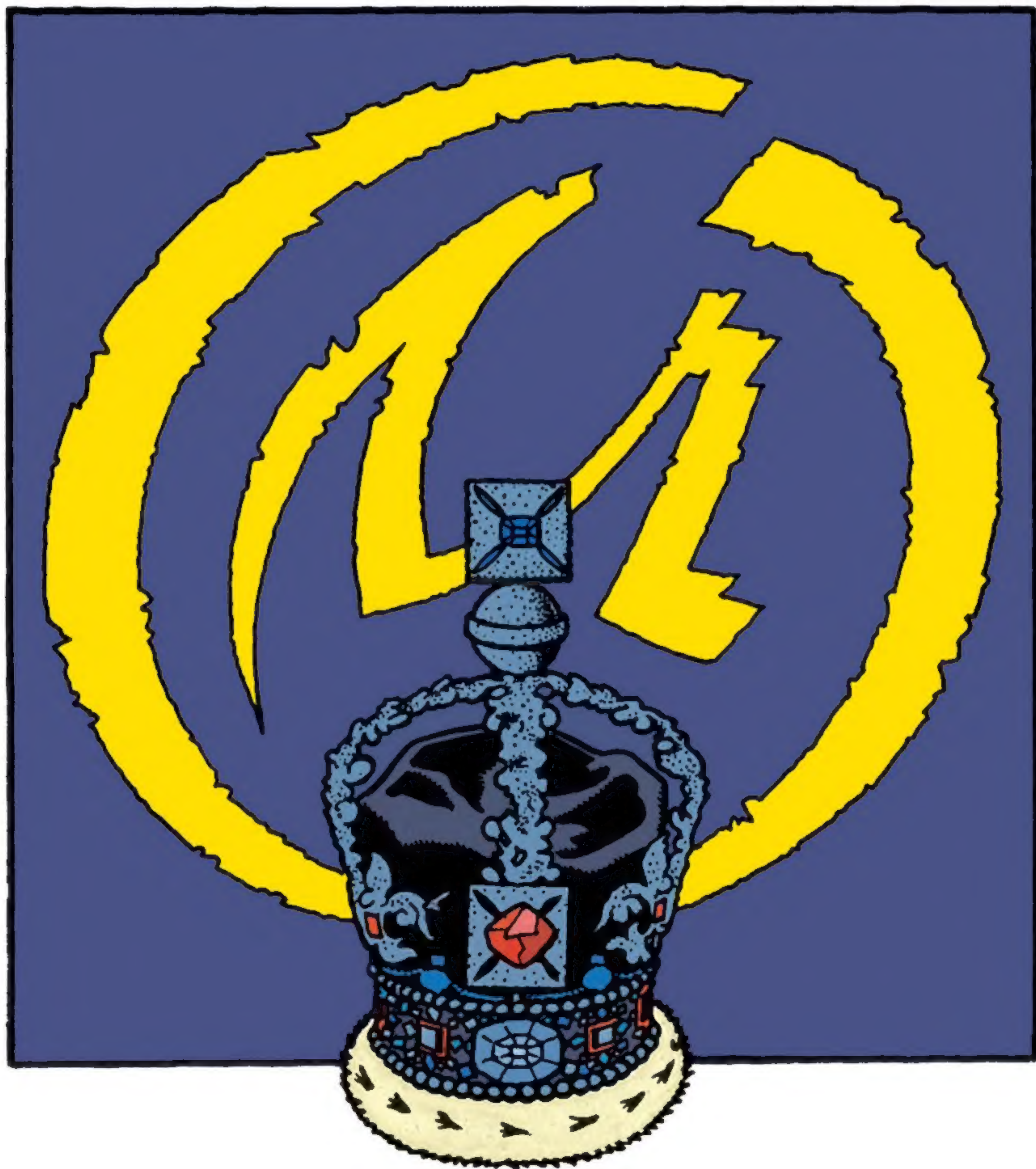






E.P. JACOBS

THE YELLOW "M"



Original title: La Marque Jaune

Original edition: © Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud – Lombard S.A.) 1987
by E.P. Jacobs
www.dargaud.com

Translator: Clarence E. Holland
Lettering and text layout: Alban Perinet

This edition published in Great Britain in 2007 by
Cinebook Ltd
56 Beech Avenue
Canterbury, Kent
CT4 7TA
www.cinebook.com

Third printing: August 2010
Printed in Spain by Just Colour Graphic

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-905460-21-2





BIG BEN HAS JUST STRUCK ONE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. LONDON, THE HUGE CAPITAL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, STRETCHES OUT AS BIG AS A KINGDOM ITSELF BENEATH THE RAIN, WHICH HAS FALLEN INCESSANTLY SINCE THE PREVIOUS DAY. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF A SOMBRE SKY, THE TOWER OF LONDON, AT THE HEART OF THE CITY, THRUSTS ITS HARD, MEDIEVAL SILHOUETTE.



EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE ASLEEP INSIDE THE ANCIENT FORTRESS; HOWEVER, IN THE SHELTER OF ITS BATTLEMENTS...



...THE WATCH PATROL OF ROYAL FUSILLIERS IS FINISHING ITS INSPECTION OF THE SENTINELS...



...WHO MOUNT THEIR VIGILANT WATCH NEAR WAKEFIELD TOWER, WHERE THE CROWN JEWELS ARE KEPT. THEN, PASSING BENEATH THE ARCH OF THE BLOODY TOWER...



... IT RETURNS TO THE GUARD ROOM.

Hang it. I'm soaking wet.

It's weather to make you long for the deserts of El Alamein.

Stop moaning. Here's some hot tea.



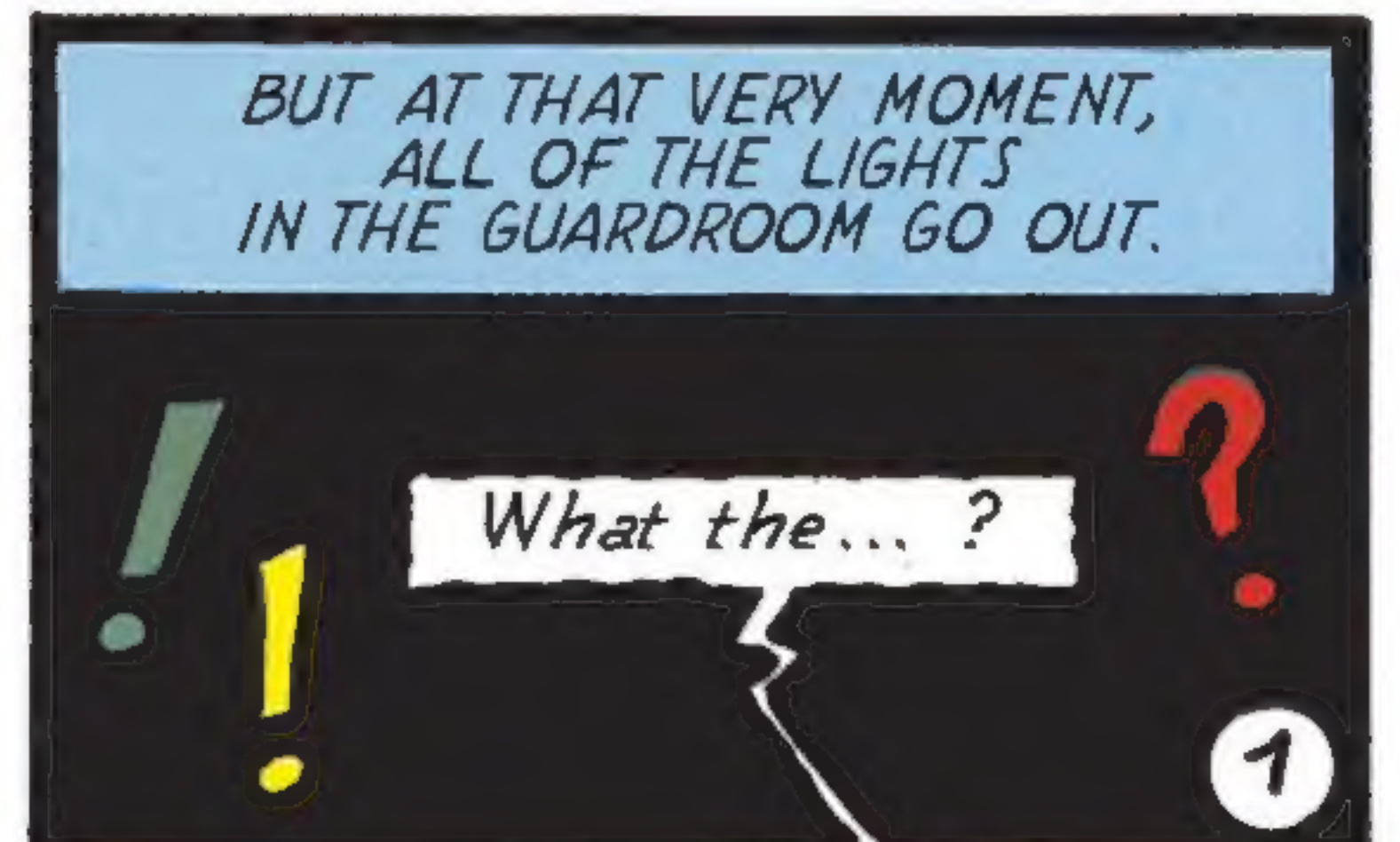
Well, what's new in the papers?

Of course they're all talking about the latest warning from the Yellow "M." Say what you like, that crafty fiend must have some cheek. Warns the police through the press that he'll strike somewhere in London in the next 24 hours, keeps his word, and into the bargain leaves his sign written in yellow chalk. What nerve!



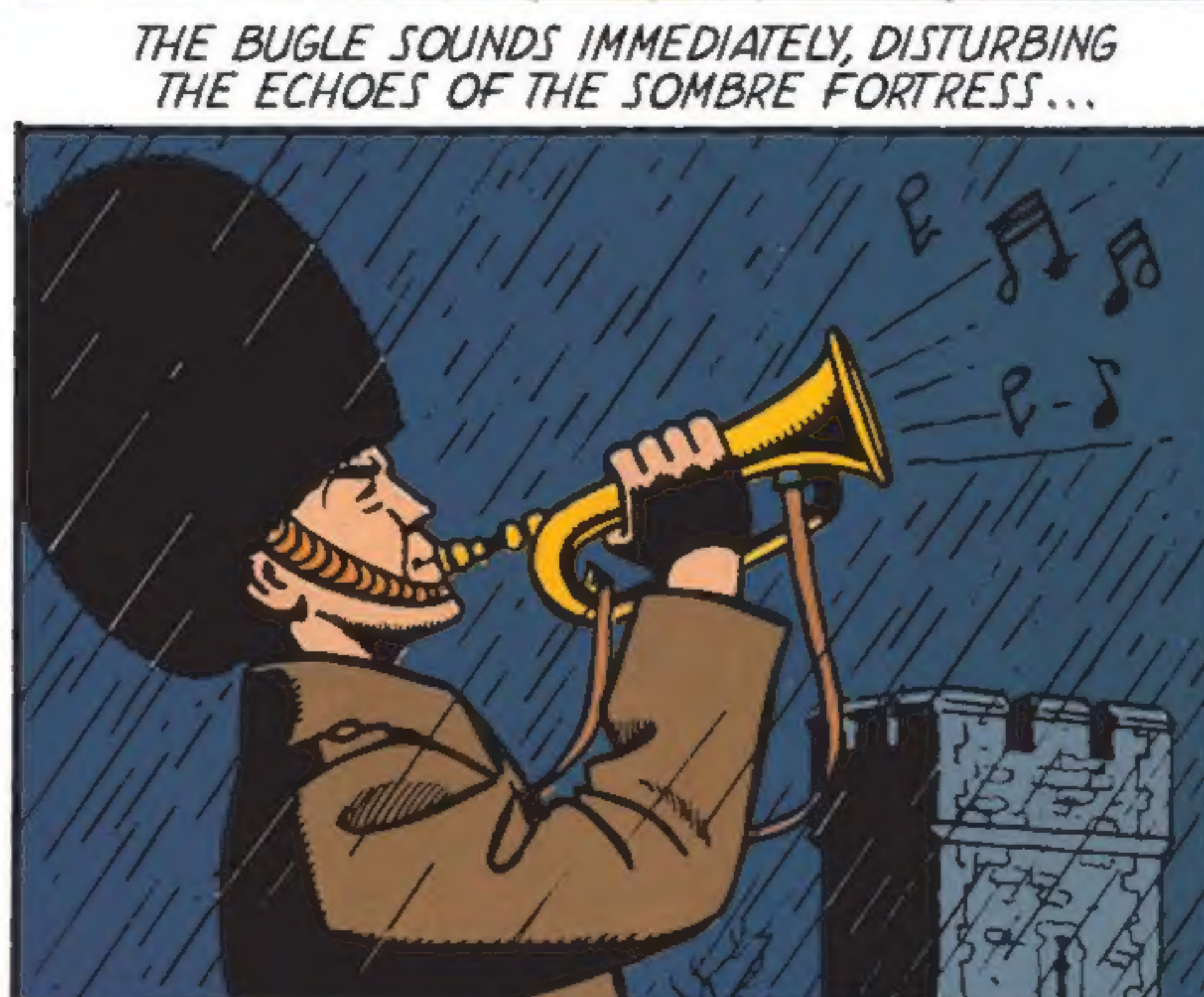
I wonder who'll cop it this time?

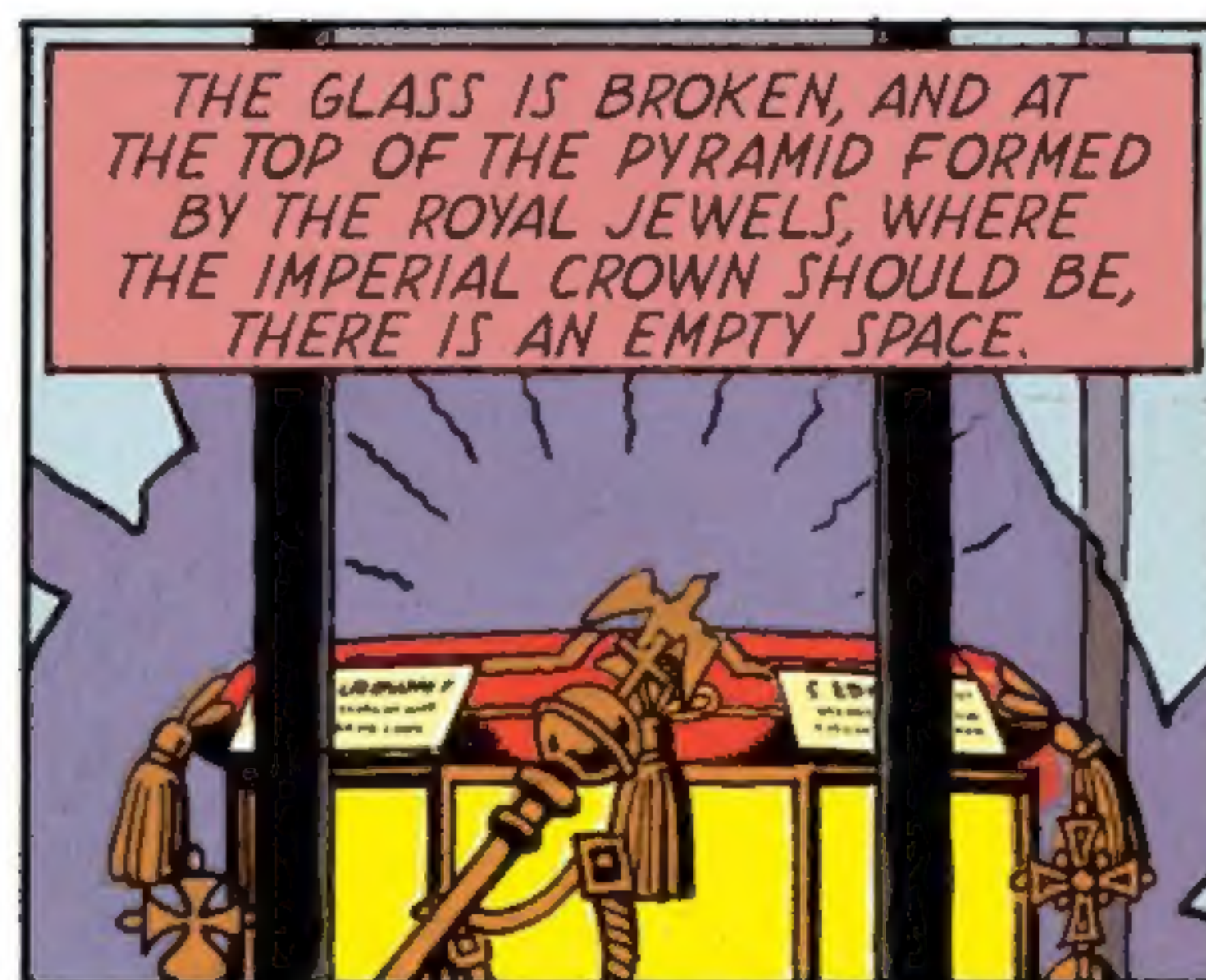
It won't be us, at any rate. If anybody tried that game here, I'd ...

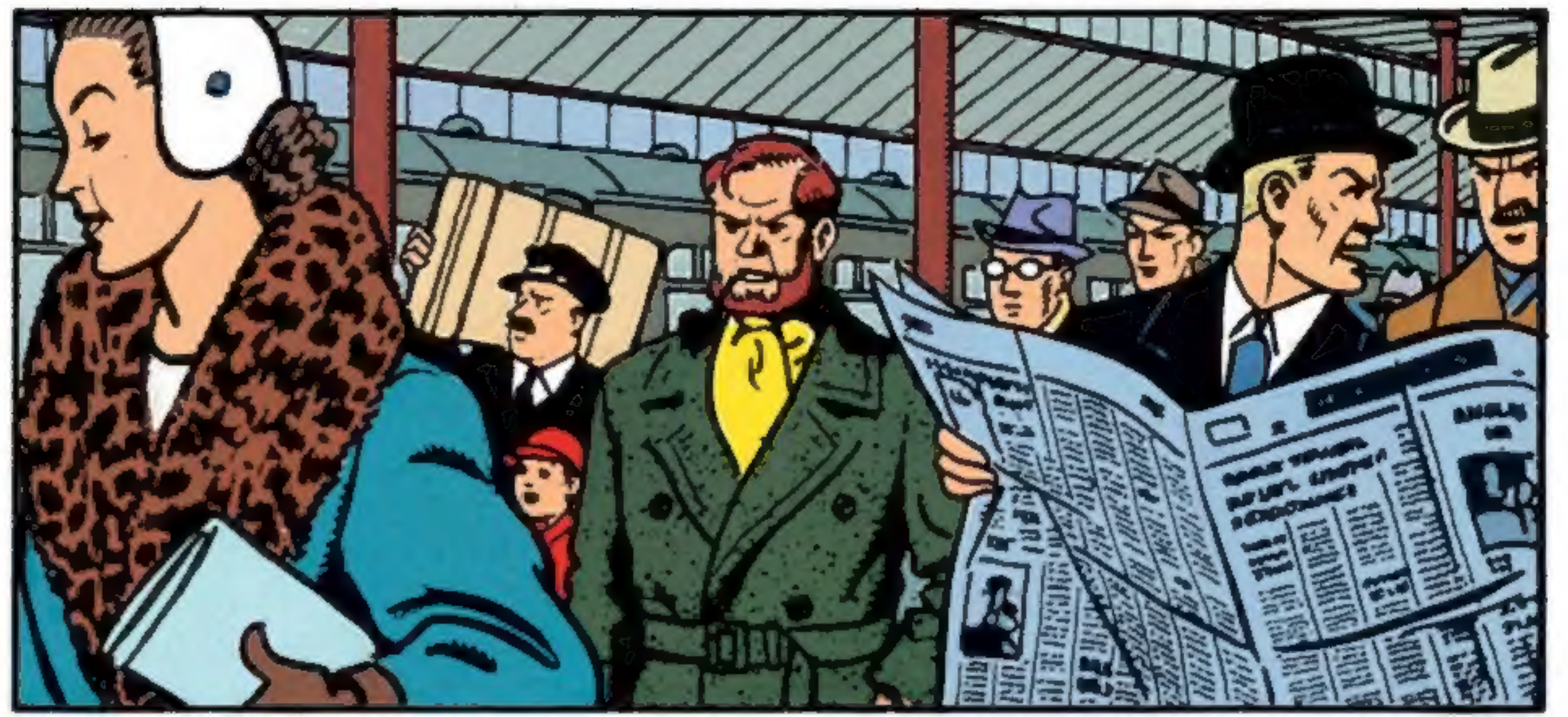
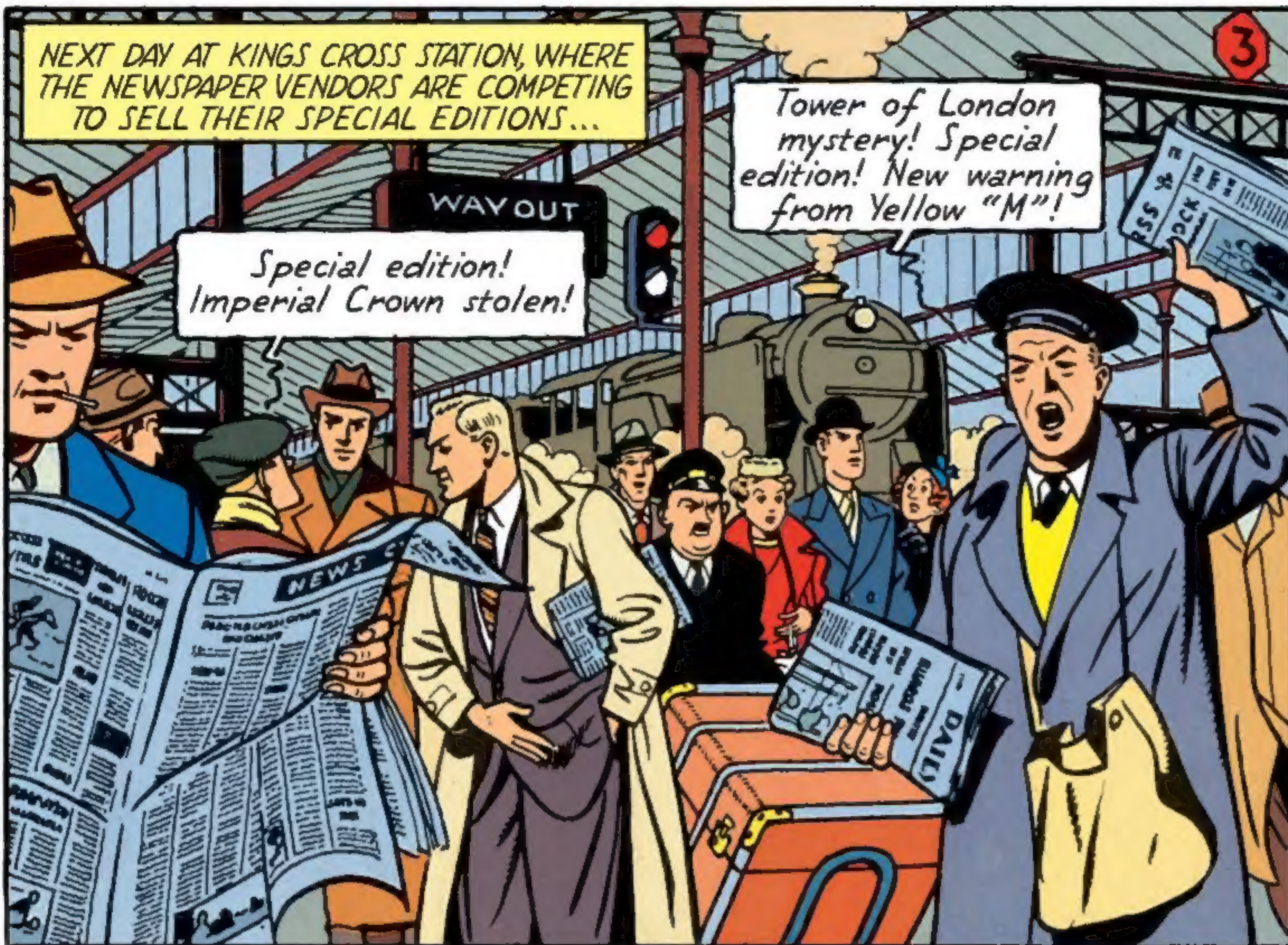


BUT AT THAT VERY MOMENT, ALL OF THE LIGHTS IN THE GUARDROOM GO OUT.

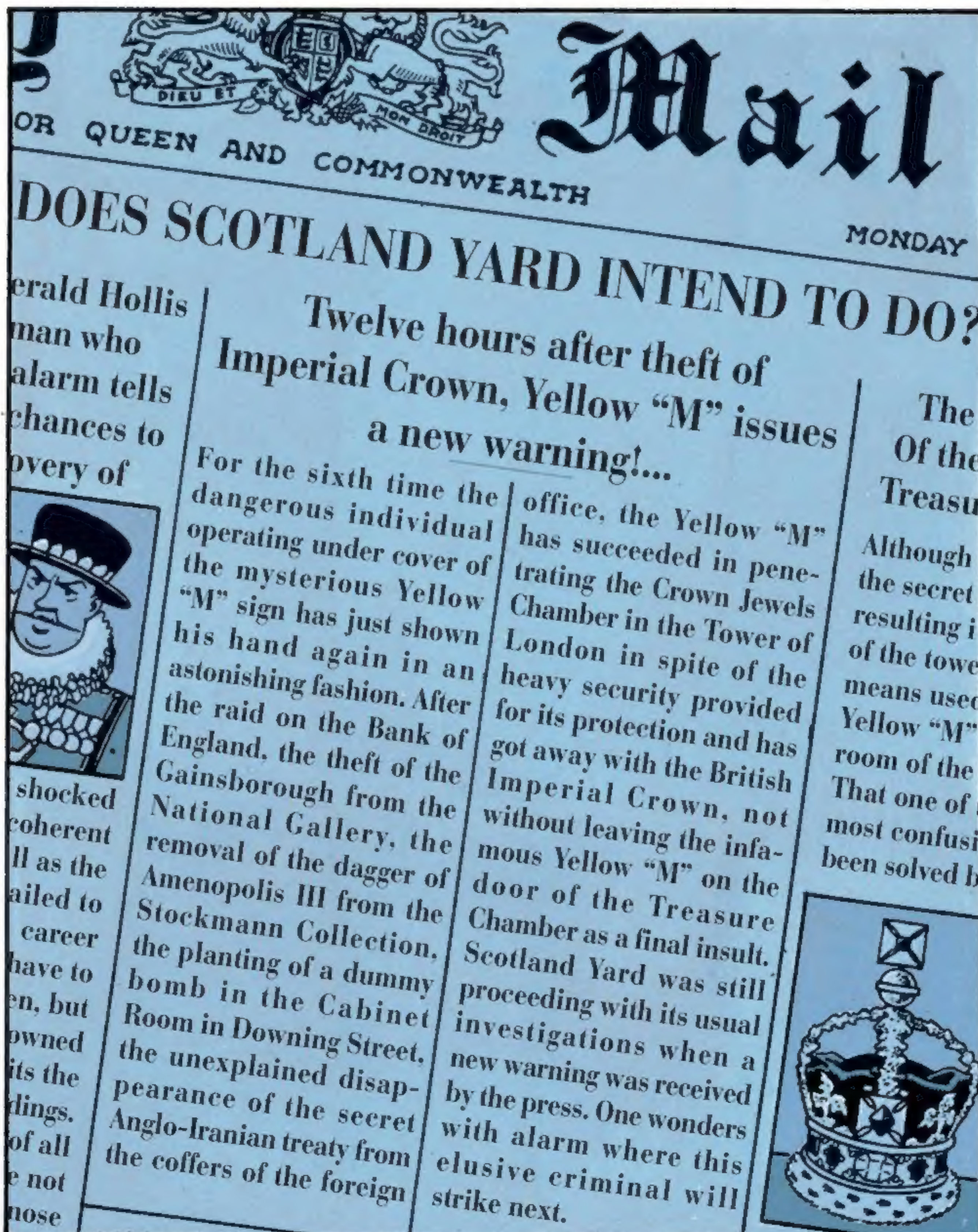
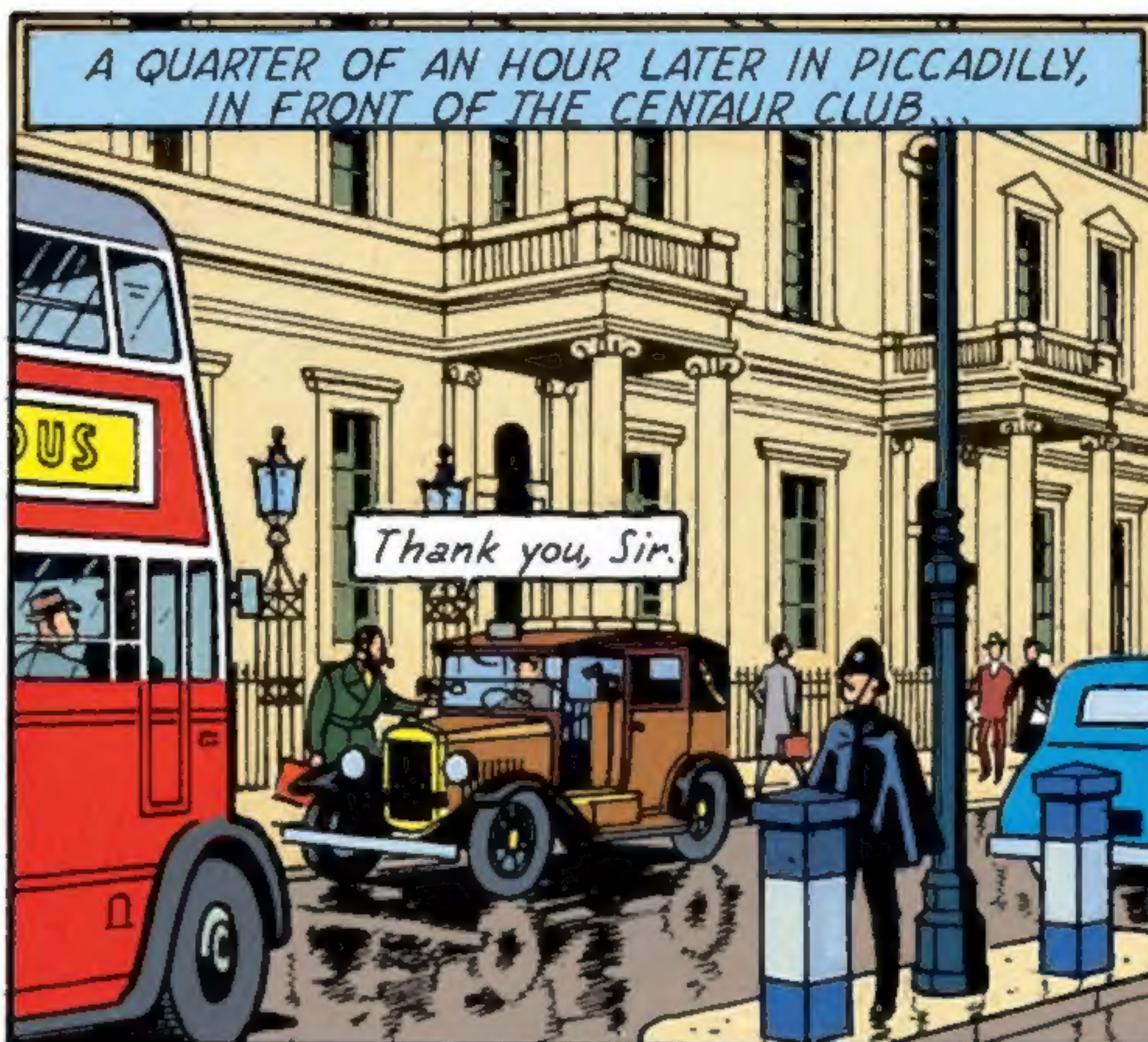
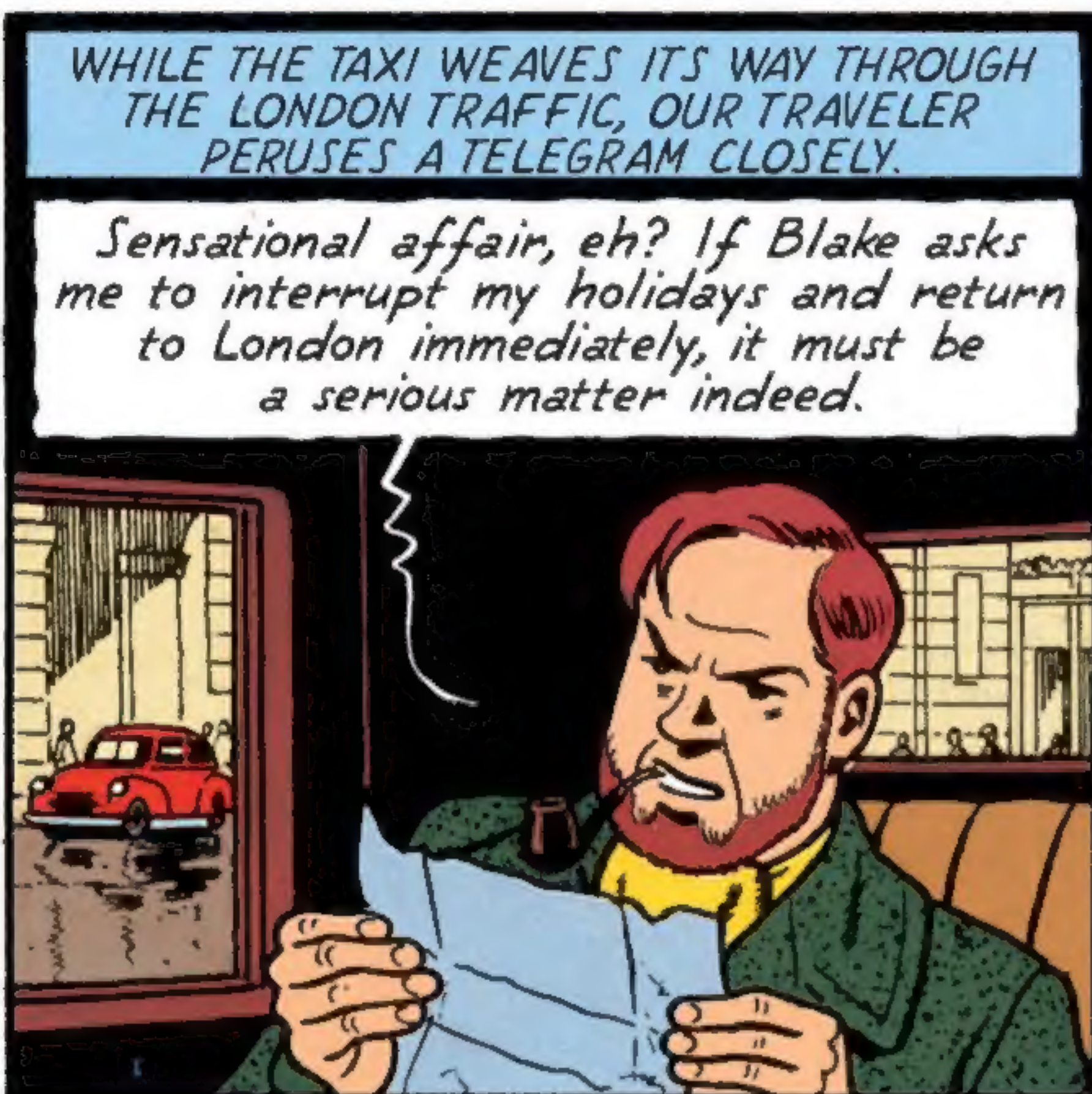
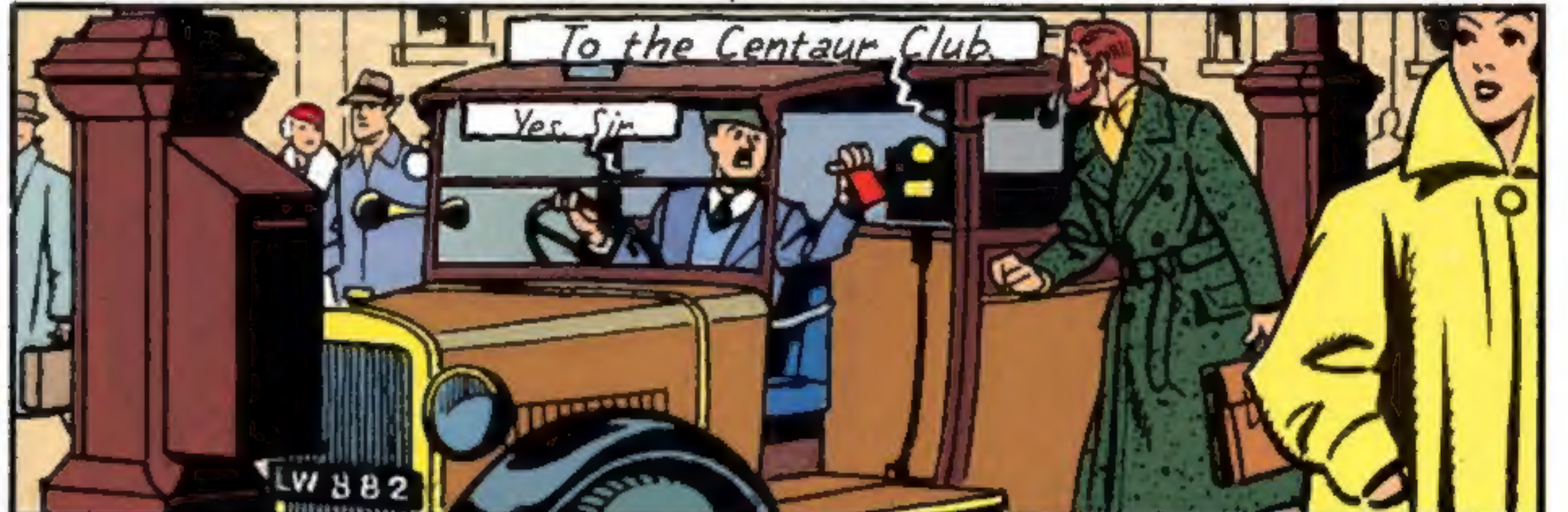
What the... ?

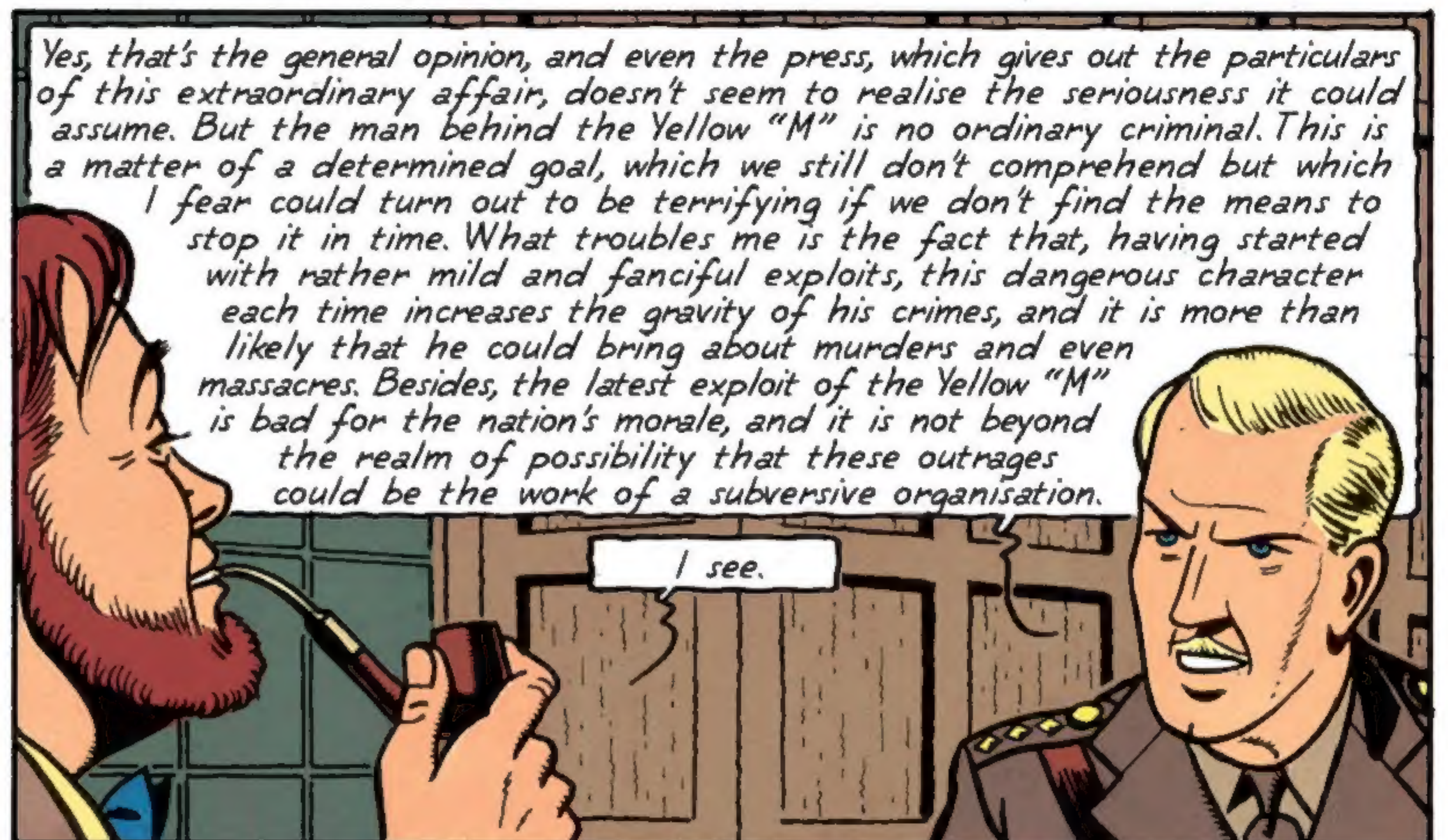
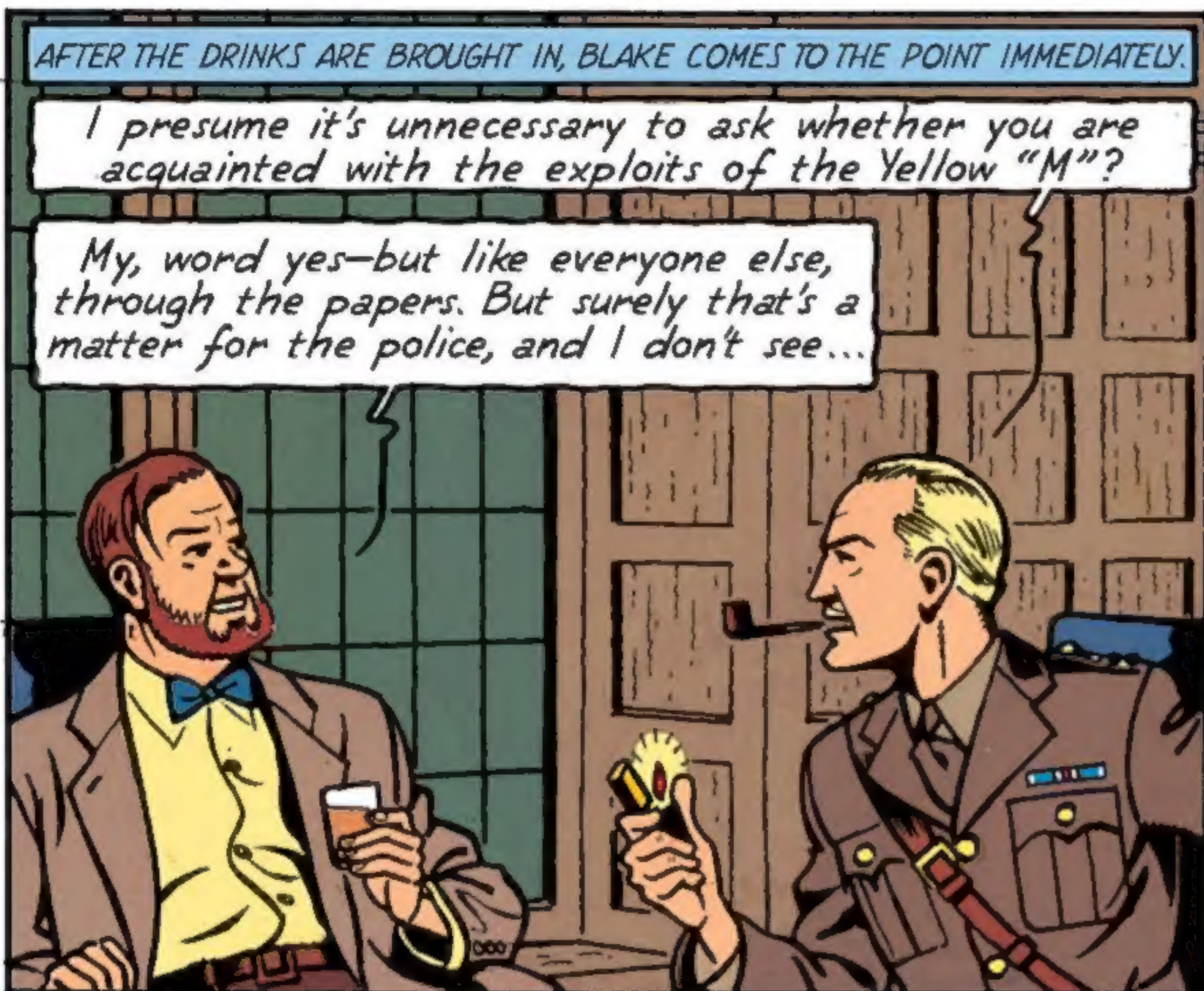


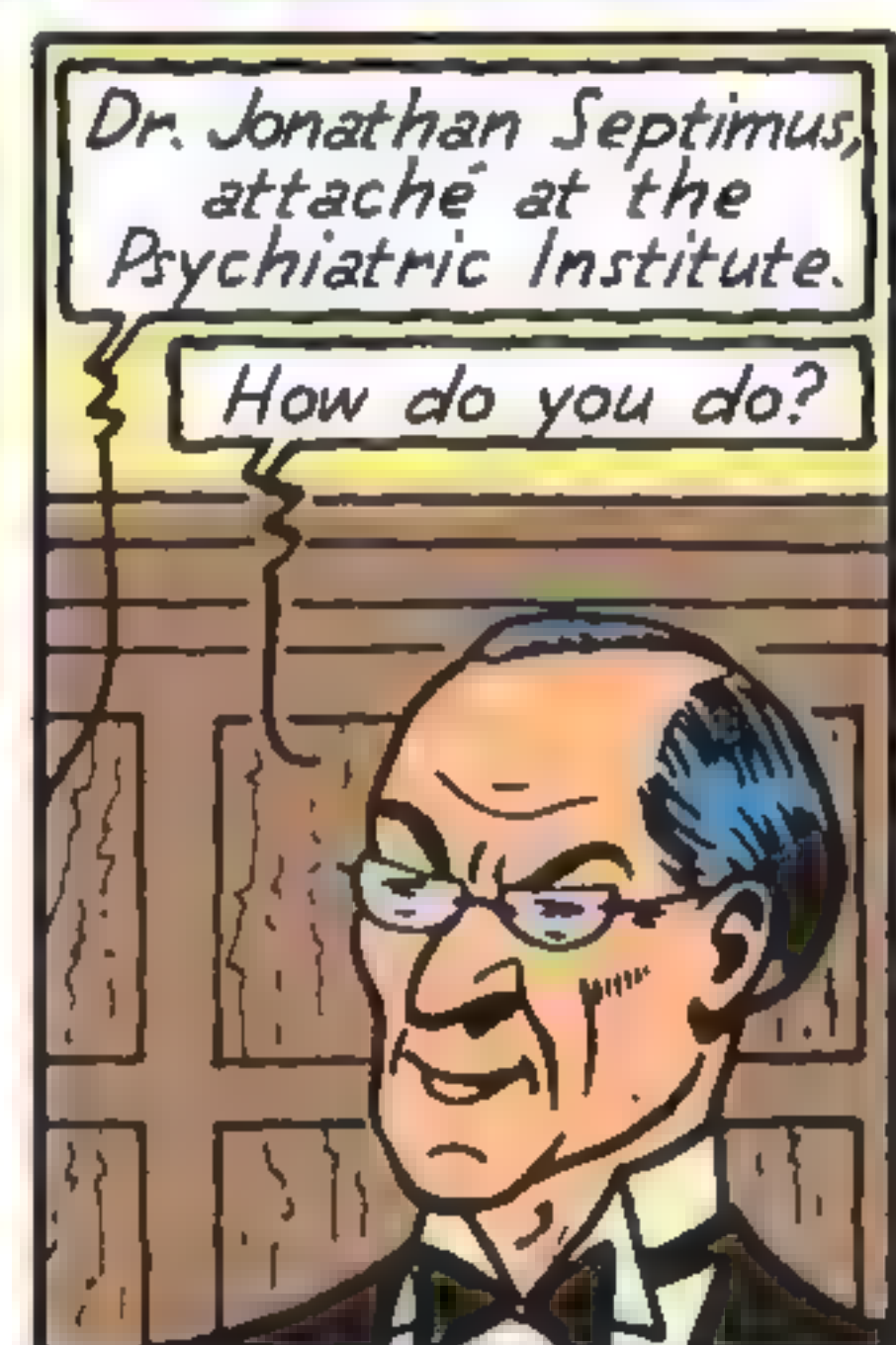
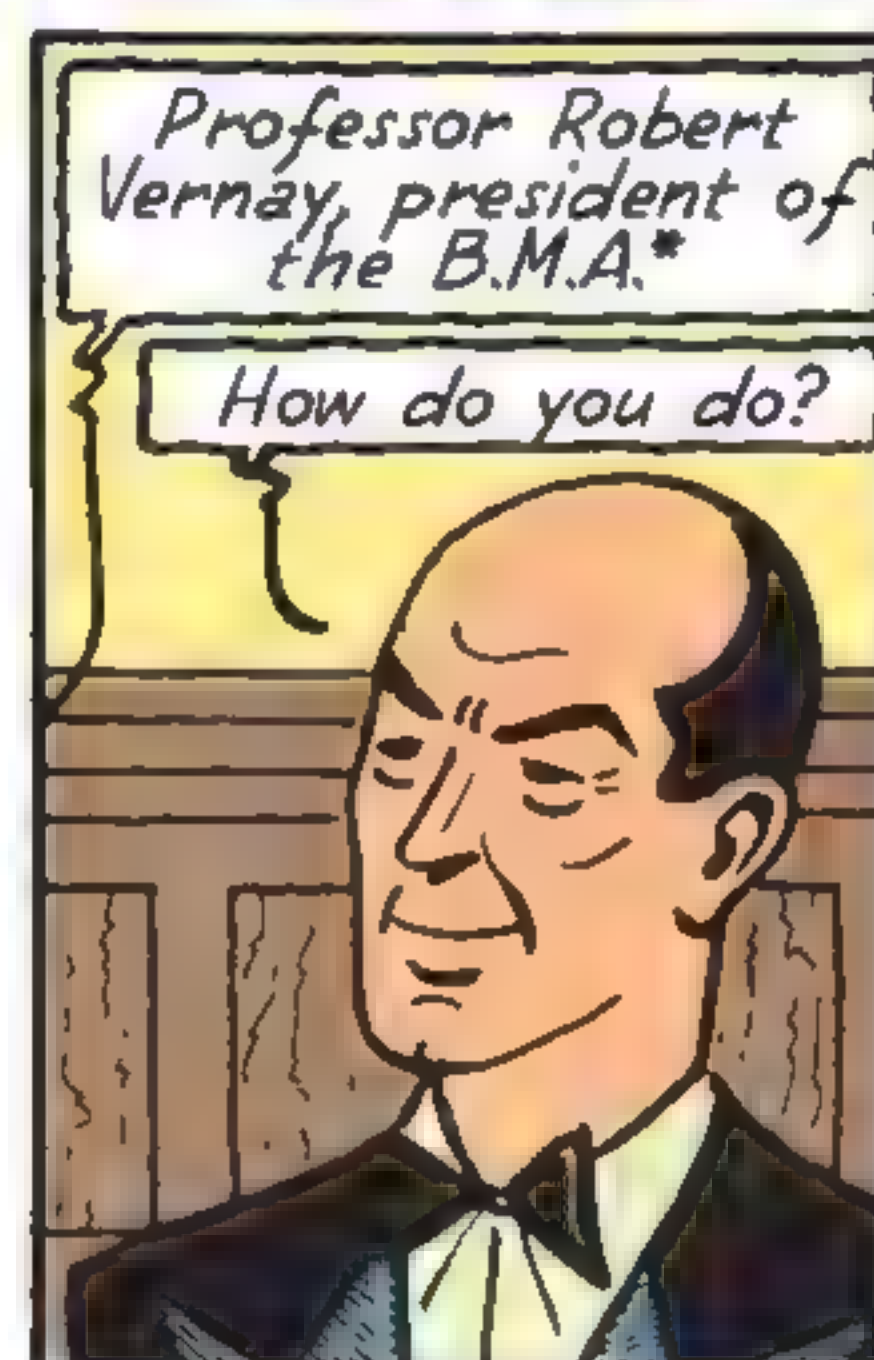
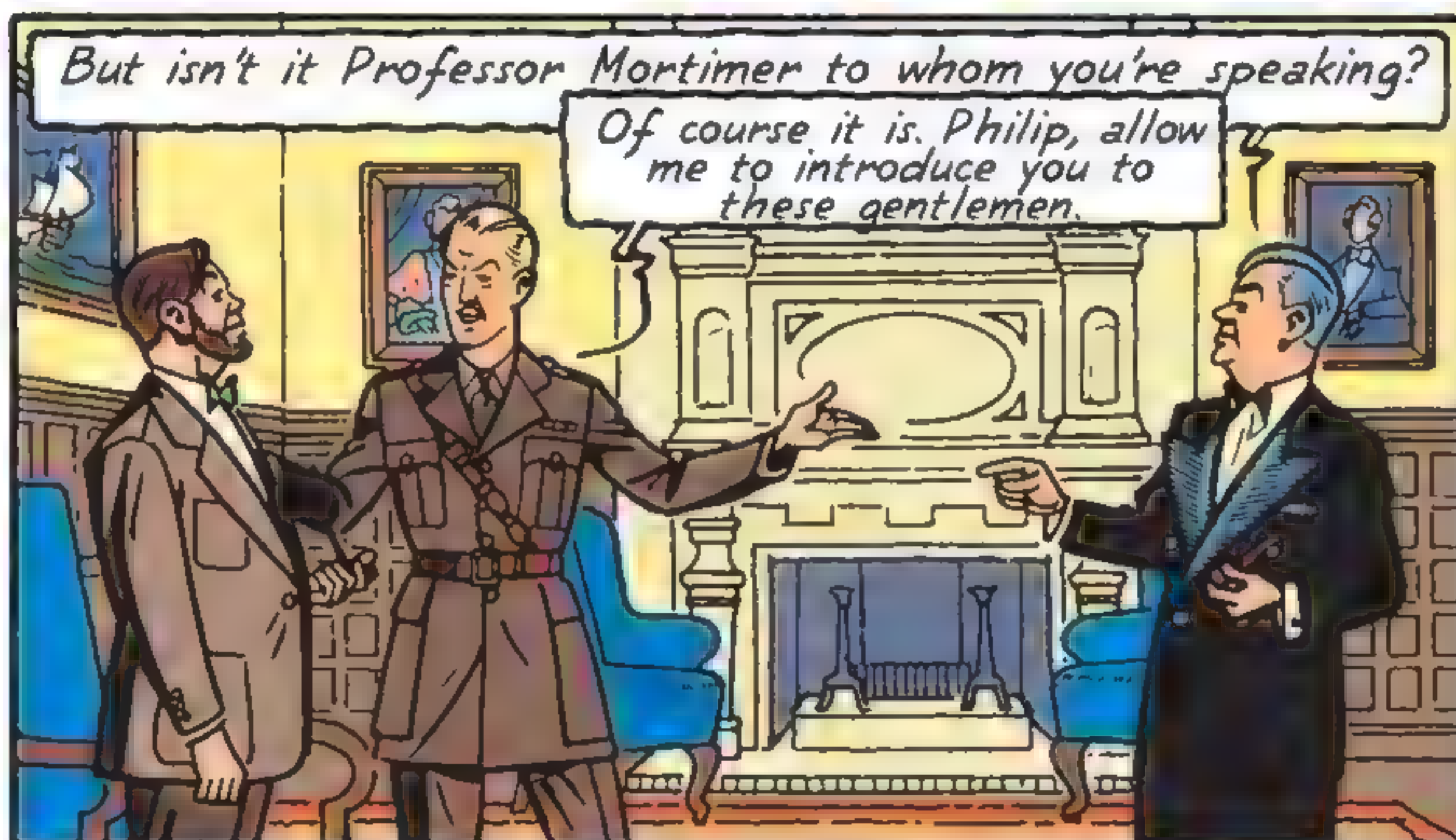
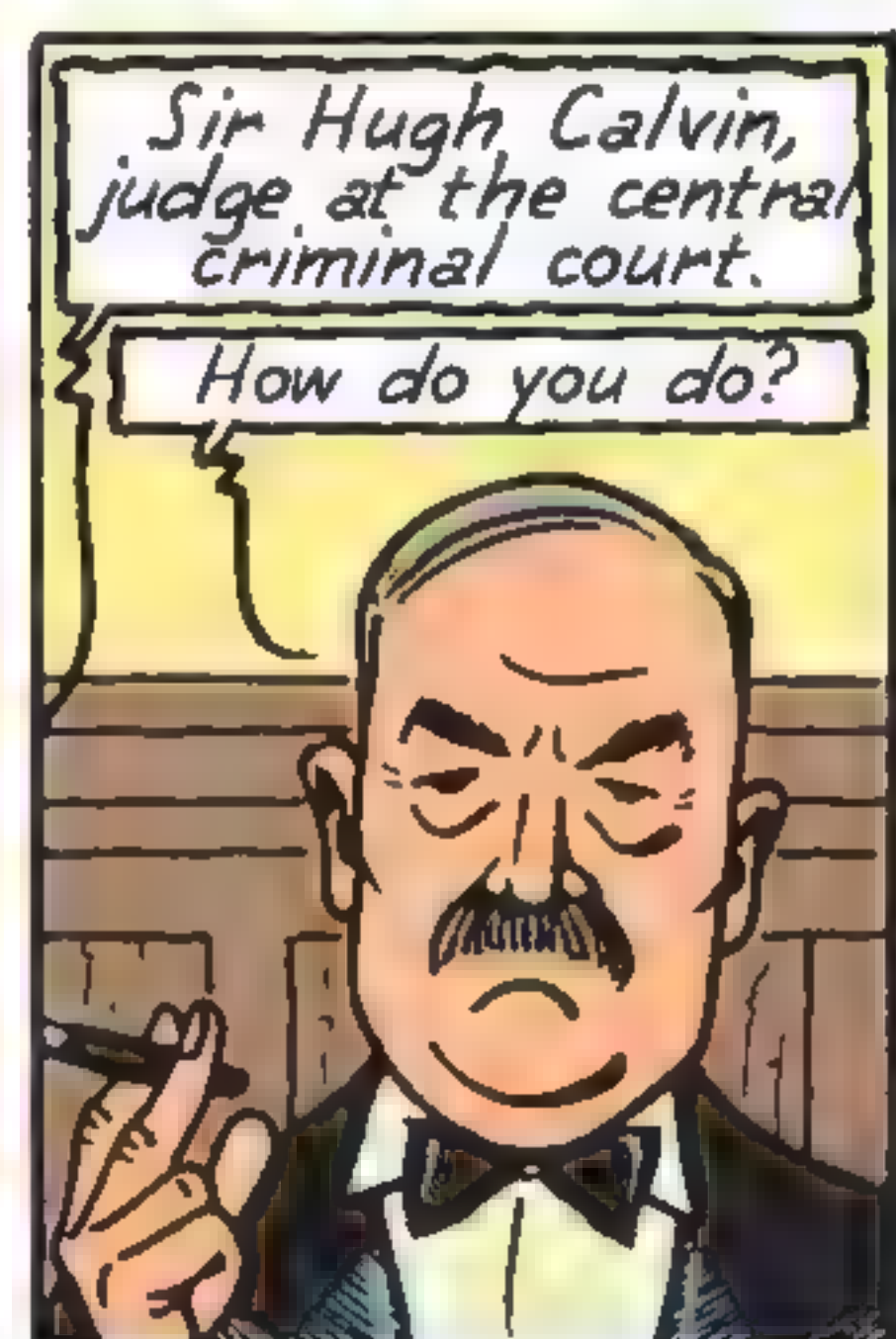




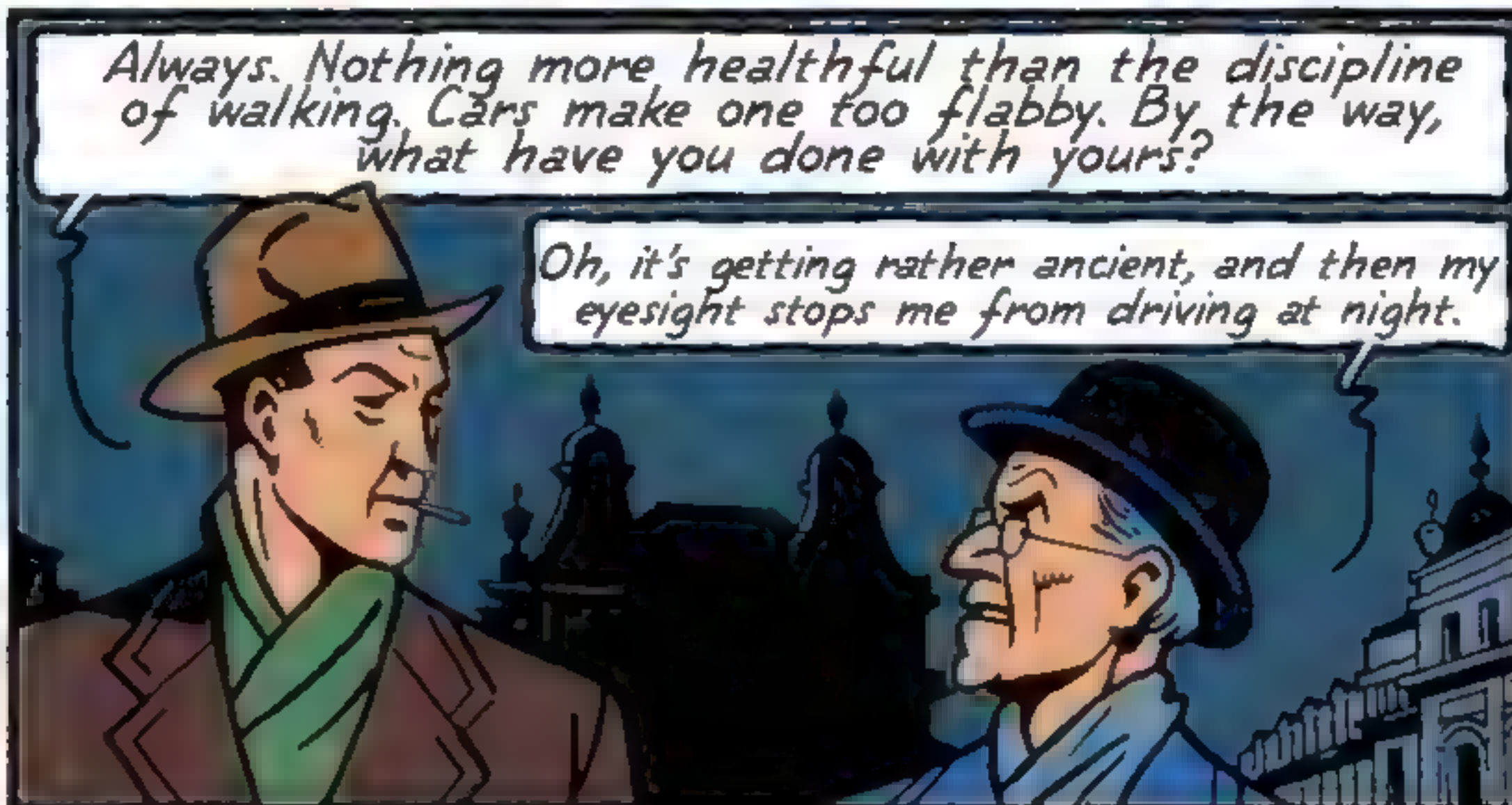
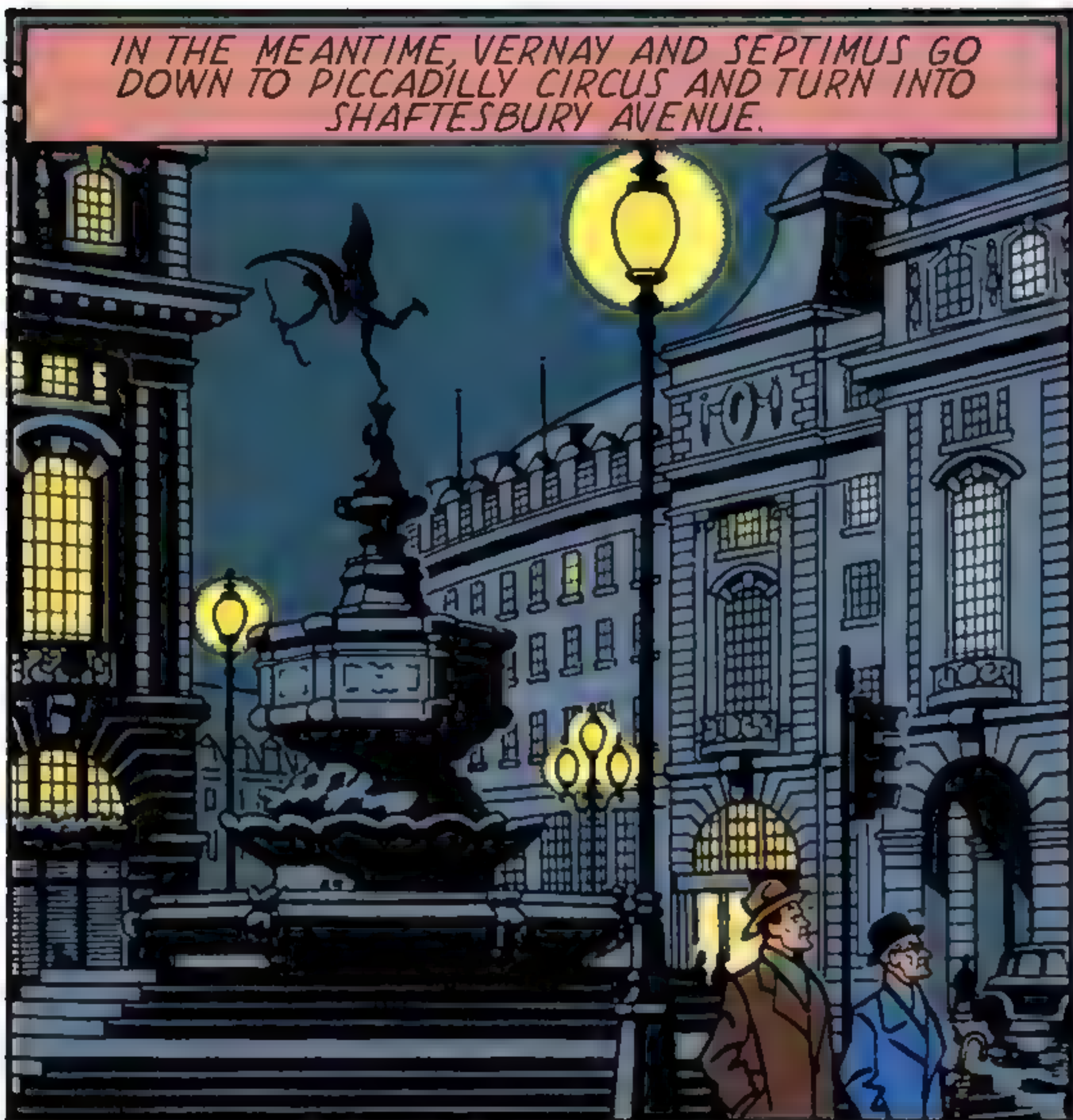
IN THE MIDST OF THE CROWD OF TRAVELERS WHO HAVE JUST COME OFF THE FLYING SCOTSMAN*, A FIGURE WELL KNOWN TO OUR READERS WALKS QUICKLY TOWARDS THE EXIT.

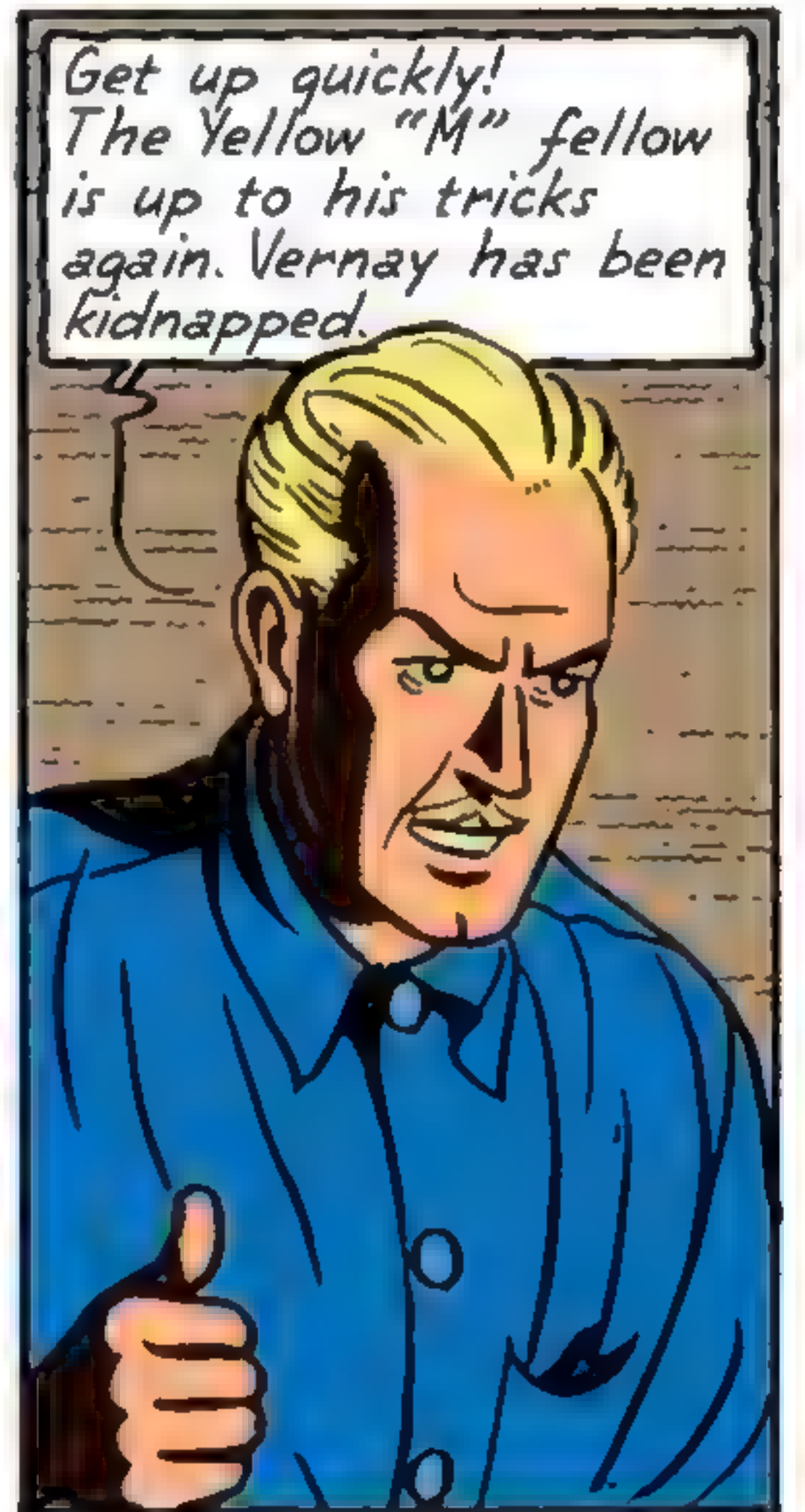
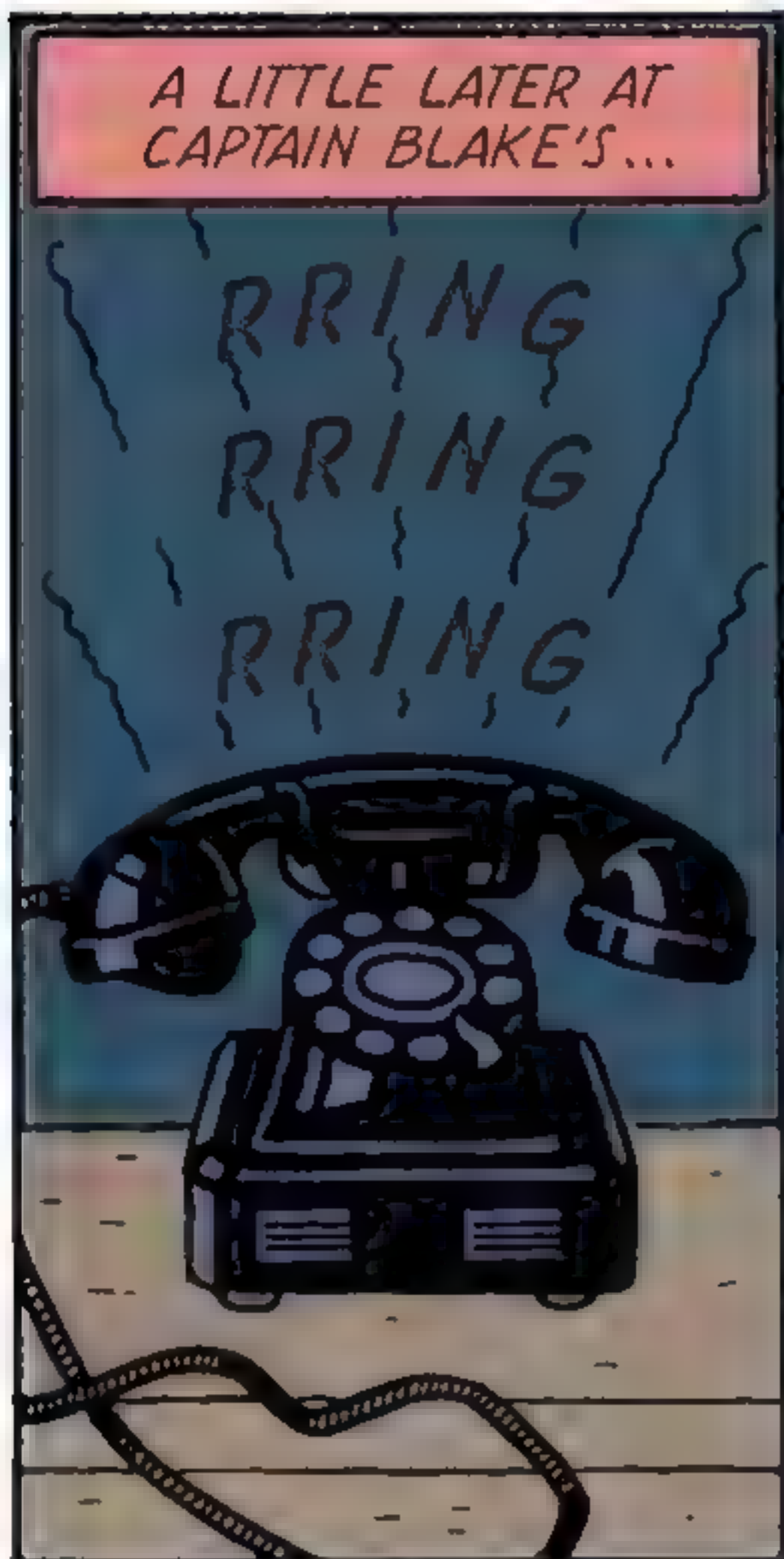
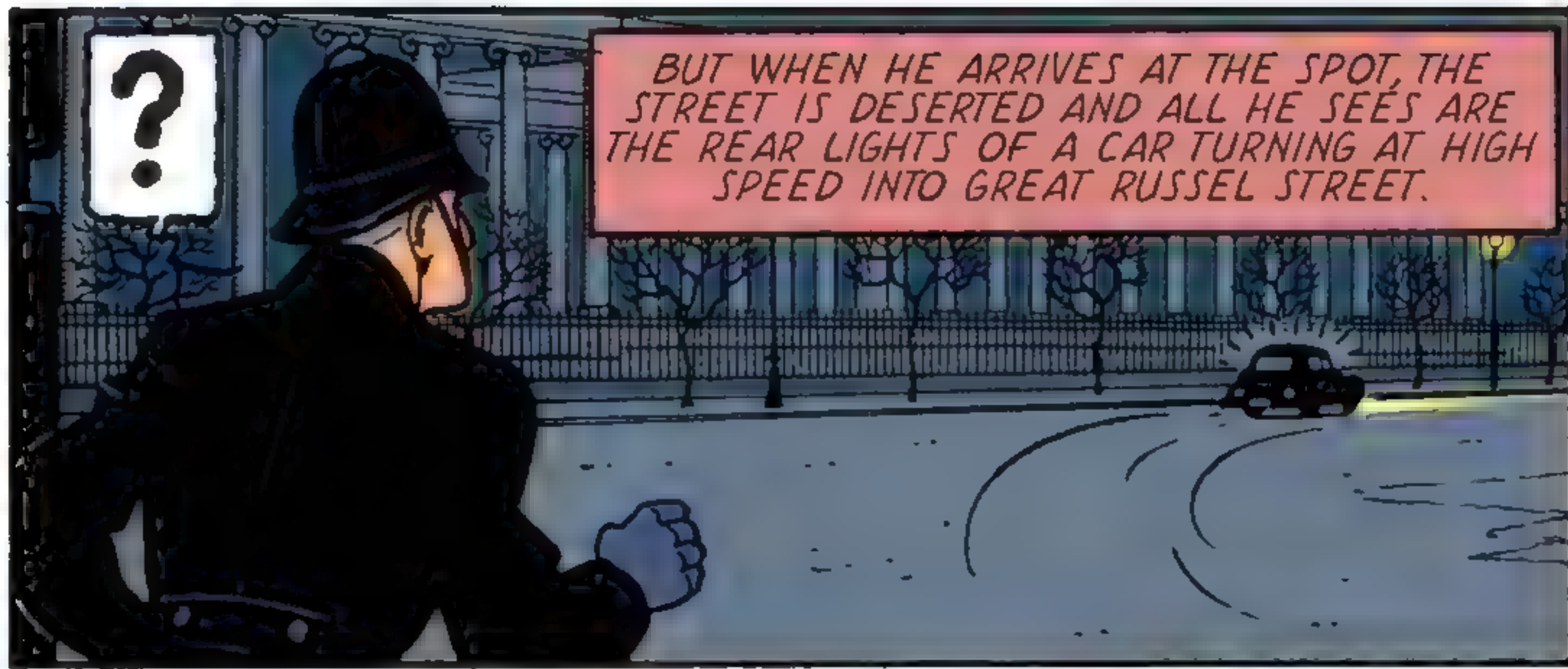


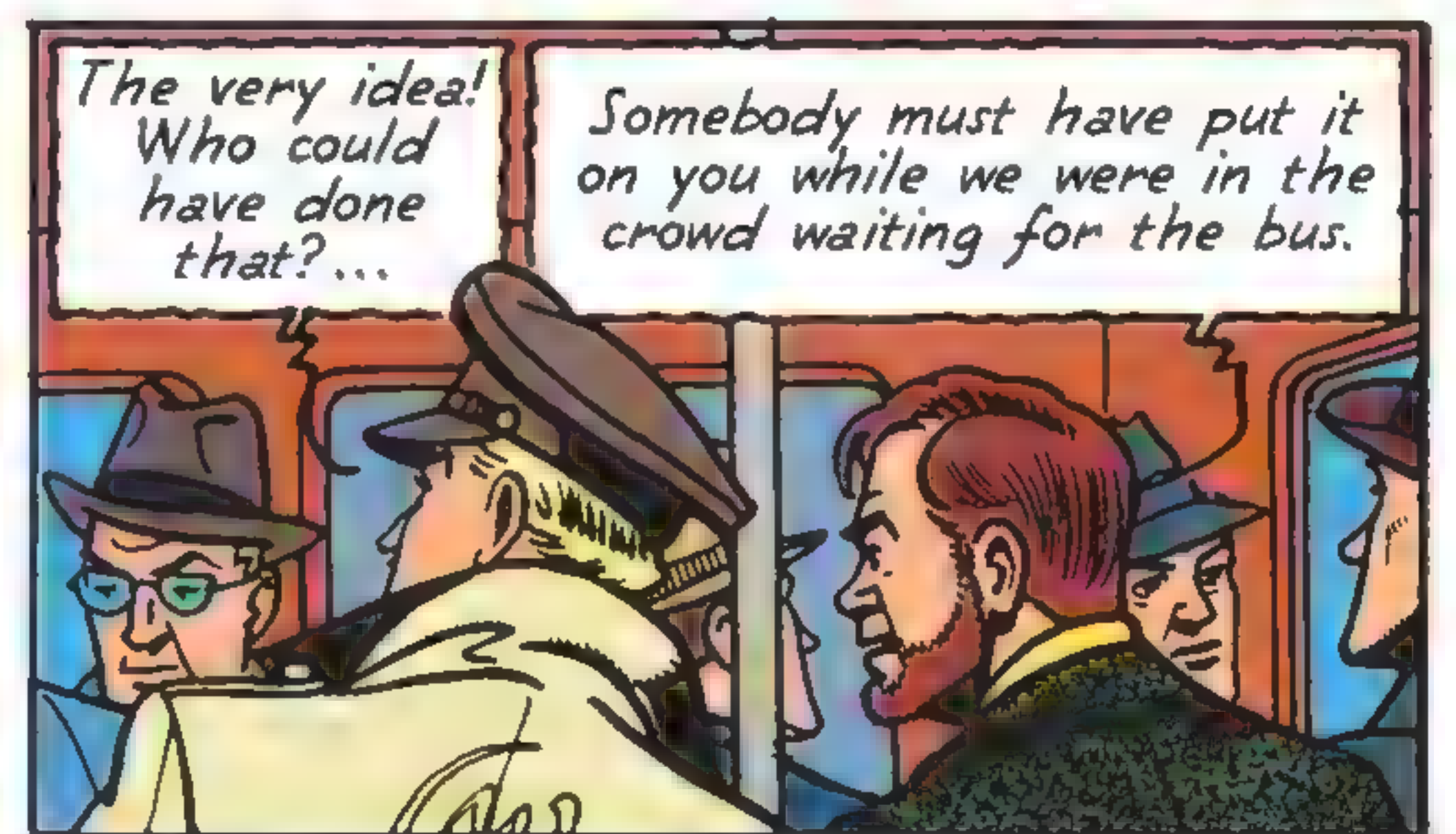
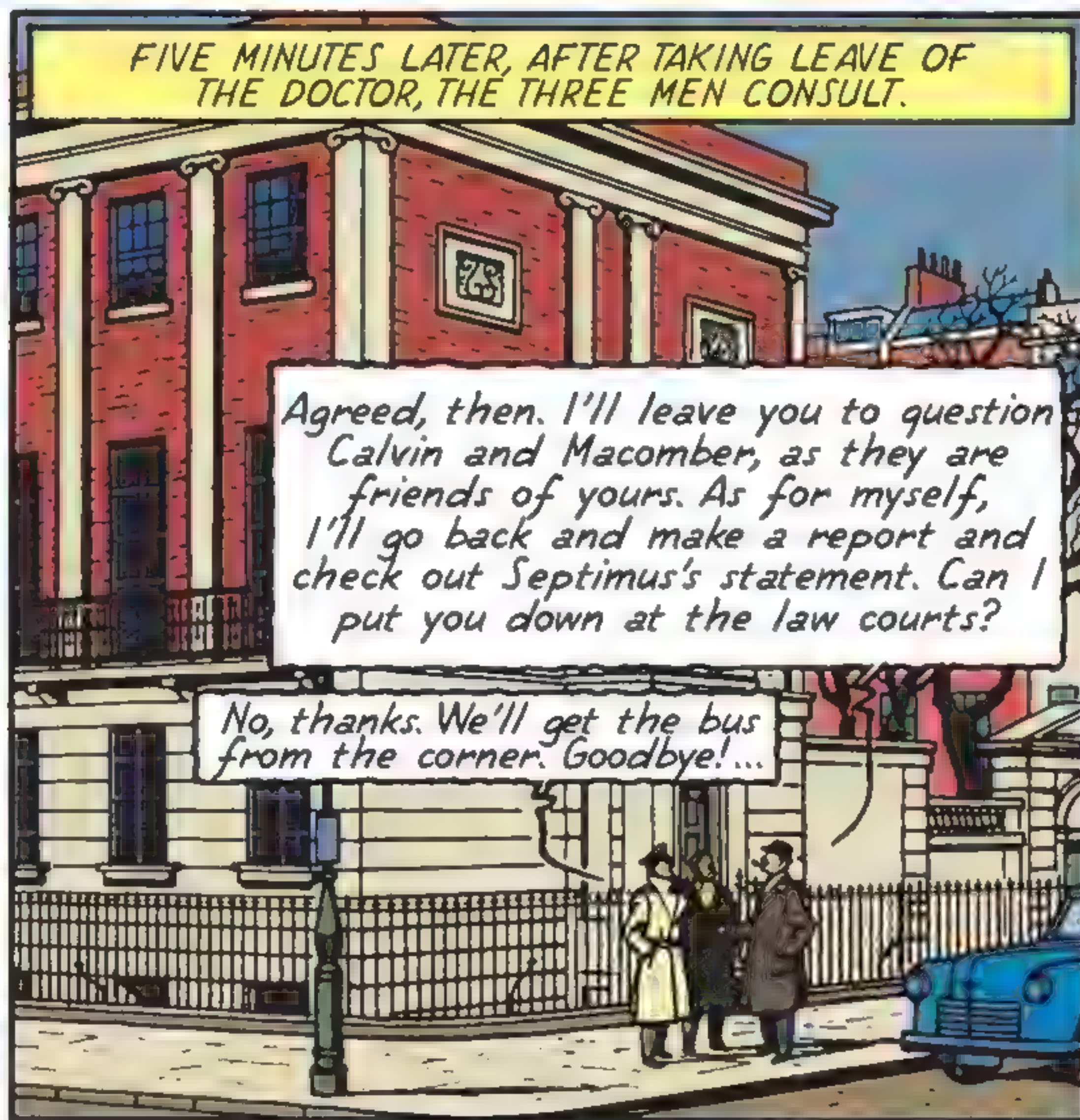
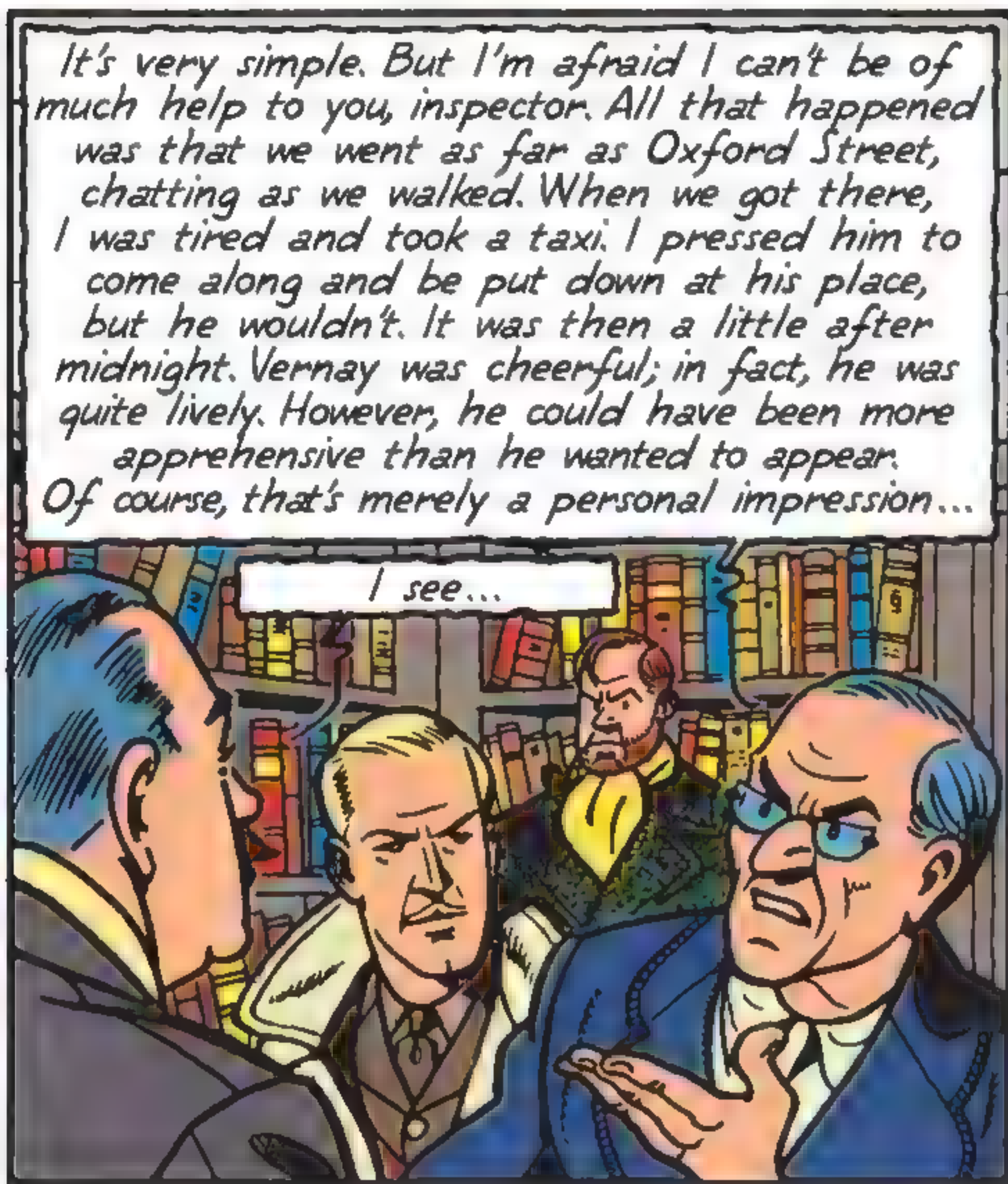




*B.M.A. = BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION







AN HOUR AFTER THE EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT ON THE BUS, BLAKE AND MORTIMER TAKE LEAVE OF JUDGE CALVIN, WHO, AS THEY EXPECTED, HAS HAD NOTHING TO TELL THEM.

I'm sorry, Francis. Perhaps you will have better luck with Macomber.

Thanks, Hugh. Excuse us for having taken up your time.

LEAVING THE LAW COURTS, OUR TWO FRIENDS GO DOWN TOWARDS FLEET STREET, THE FAMED HOME OF THE BRITISH PRESS, WHERE THE DAILY MAIL OFFICES ARE.

AND AFTER INTRODUCING THEMSELVES...

Mr. Macomber wishes you to join him in his office. It's the second door on the left.

Thank you.

BUT AS WITH JUDGE CALVIN, MACOMBER IS UNABLE TO THROW THE SLIGHTEST GLIMMER OF LIGHT ON THE AFFAIR.

Vernay's life was as clear as crystal and regulated like a clock. He could knock off his 14 hours of work each day untiringly. His dedication and integrity were proverbial. No. Frankly, this kidnapping completely baffles me. And yet...

And yet what?

Well, what surprises me in this latest exploit is that, taking everything into account, it is much less spectacular than the previous ones. Don't you think so?

Unless it's the start of a new devilry!?

You're right. It's curious...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

An urgent letter for you, Mr. Macomber.

Let me have it.

!!!

Amazing! Read this!

MACOMBER TOSSES THE LETTER AFTER READING THROUGH IT.

LONDON,

DEAR SIR, I DO INFORM YOU TODAY THE 18th DECEMBER THAT AN INTERESTING EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE IN LONDON DURING THE NEXT 24 HOURS.

YOURS SINCERELY,

P.S. MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BEG YOU TO SUGGEST TO CAPTAIN BLAKE AND HIS FRIEND PROF. MORTIMER THAT THEY KEEP OUT OF THIS AFFAIR.

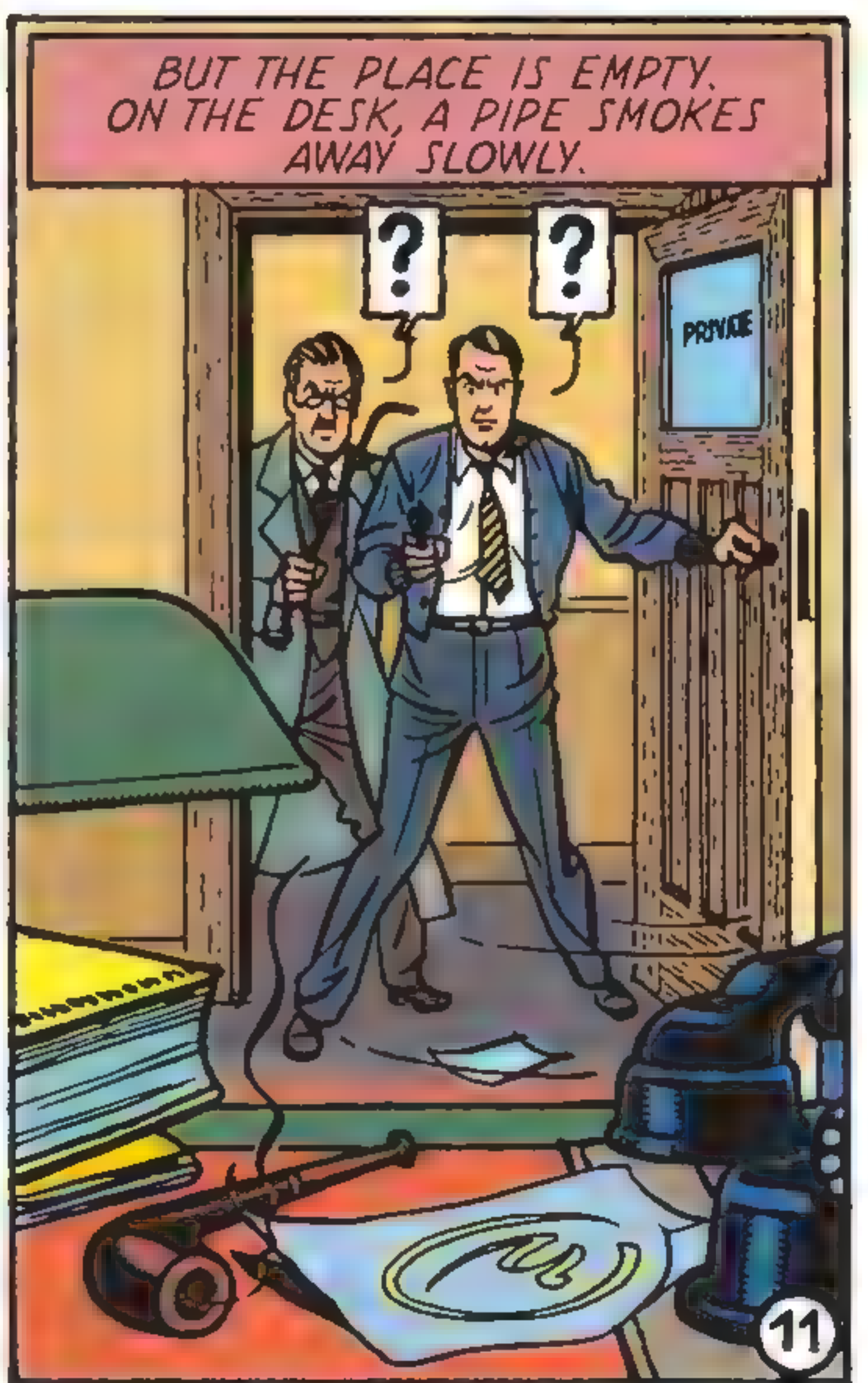
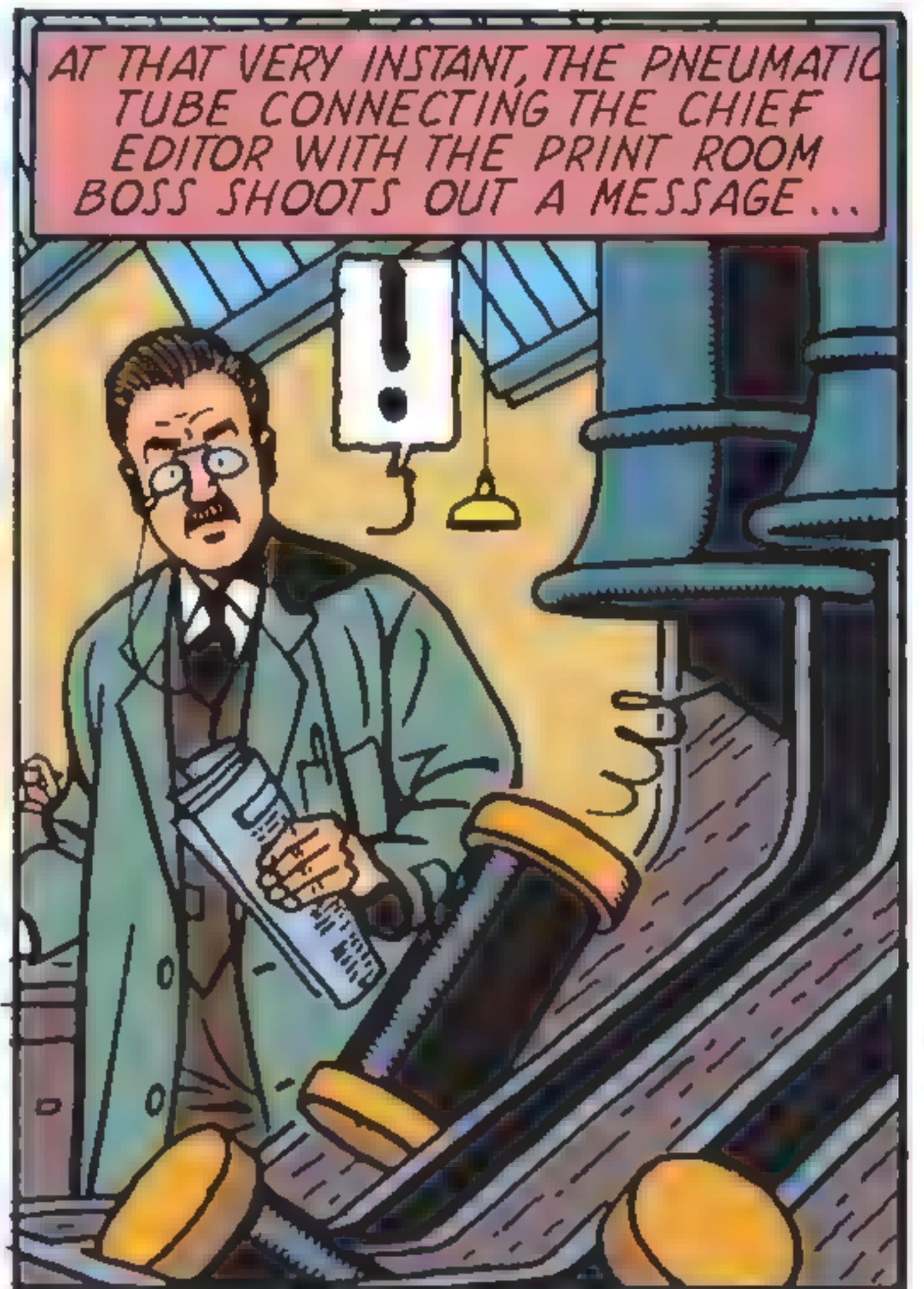
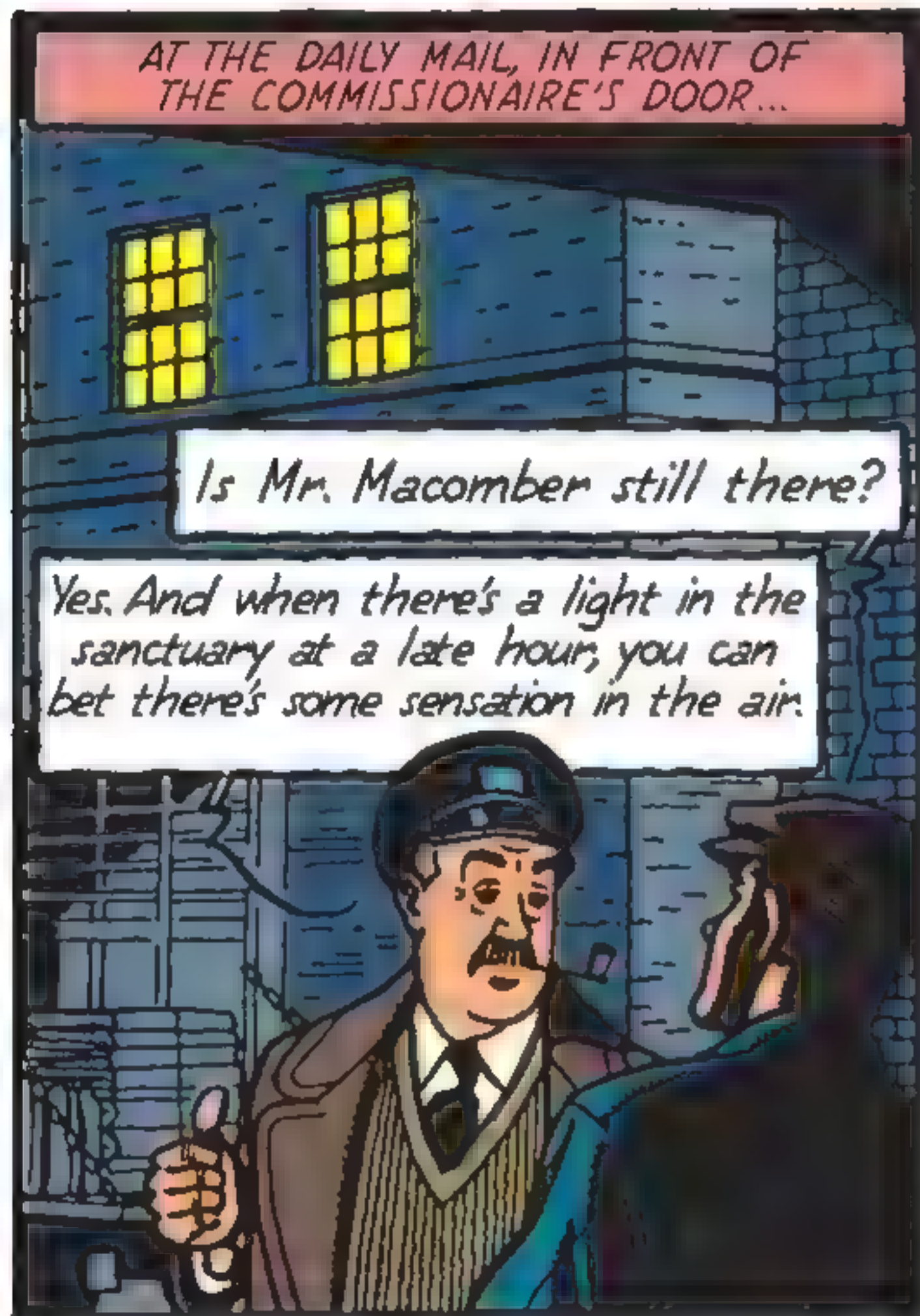
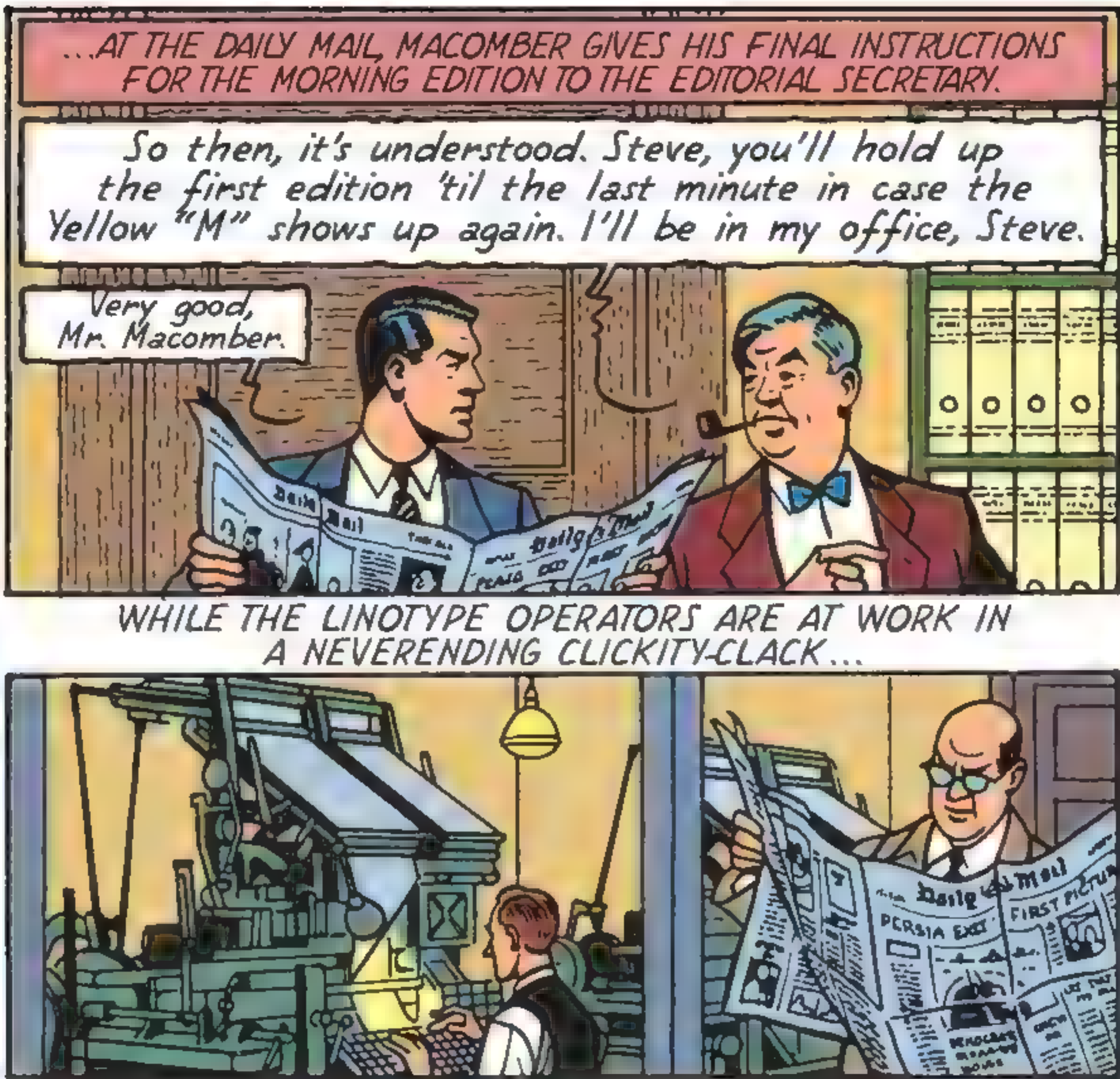
MACOMBER RUSHES TO THE TELEPHONE.

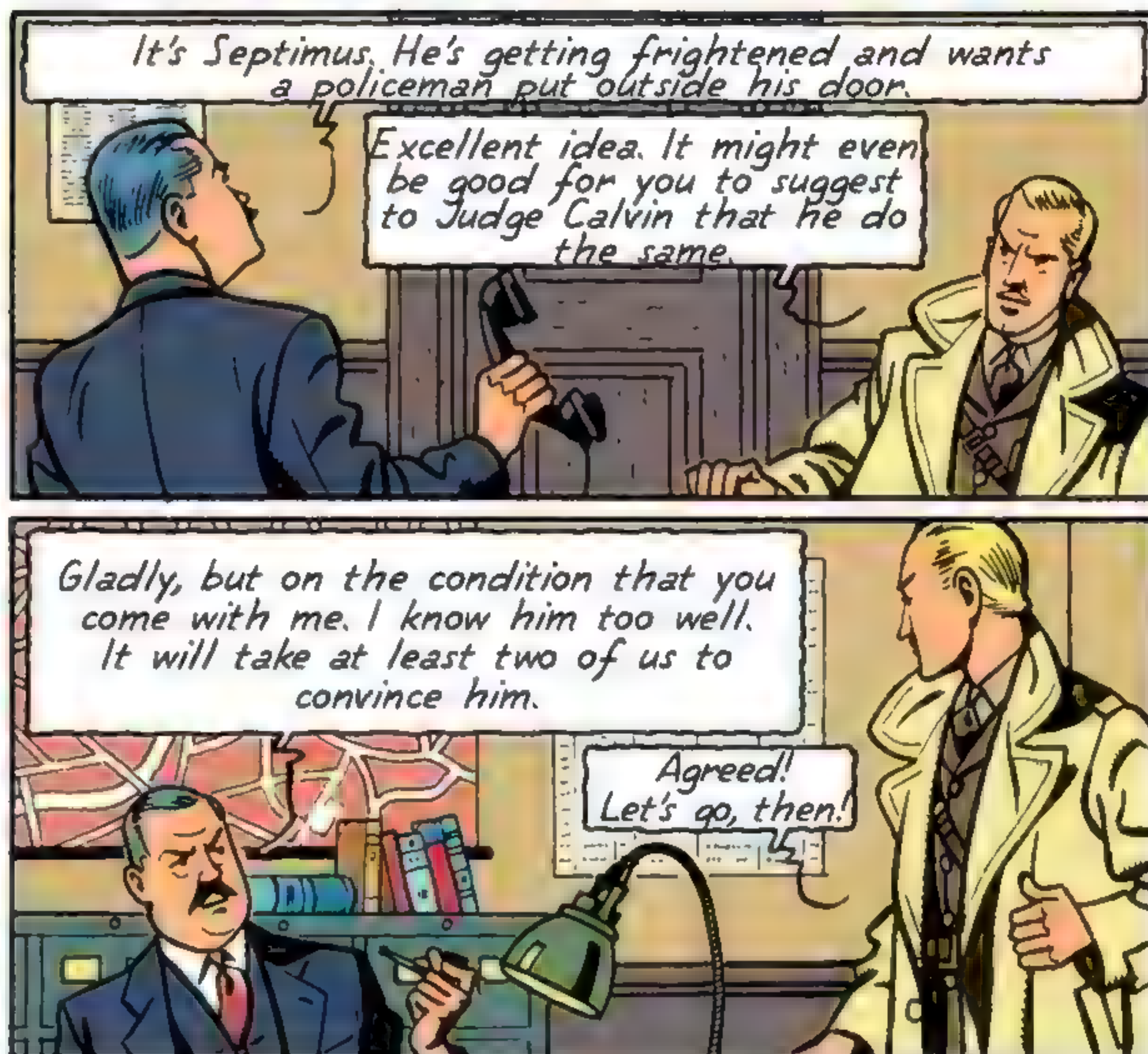
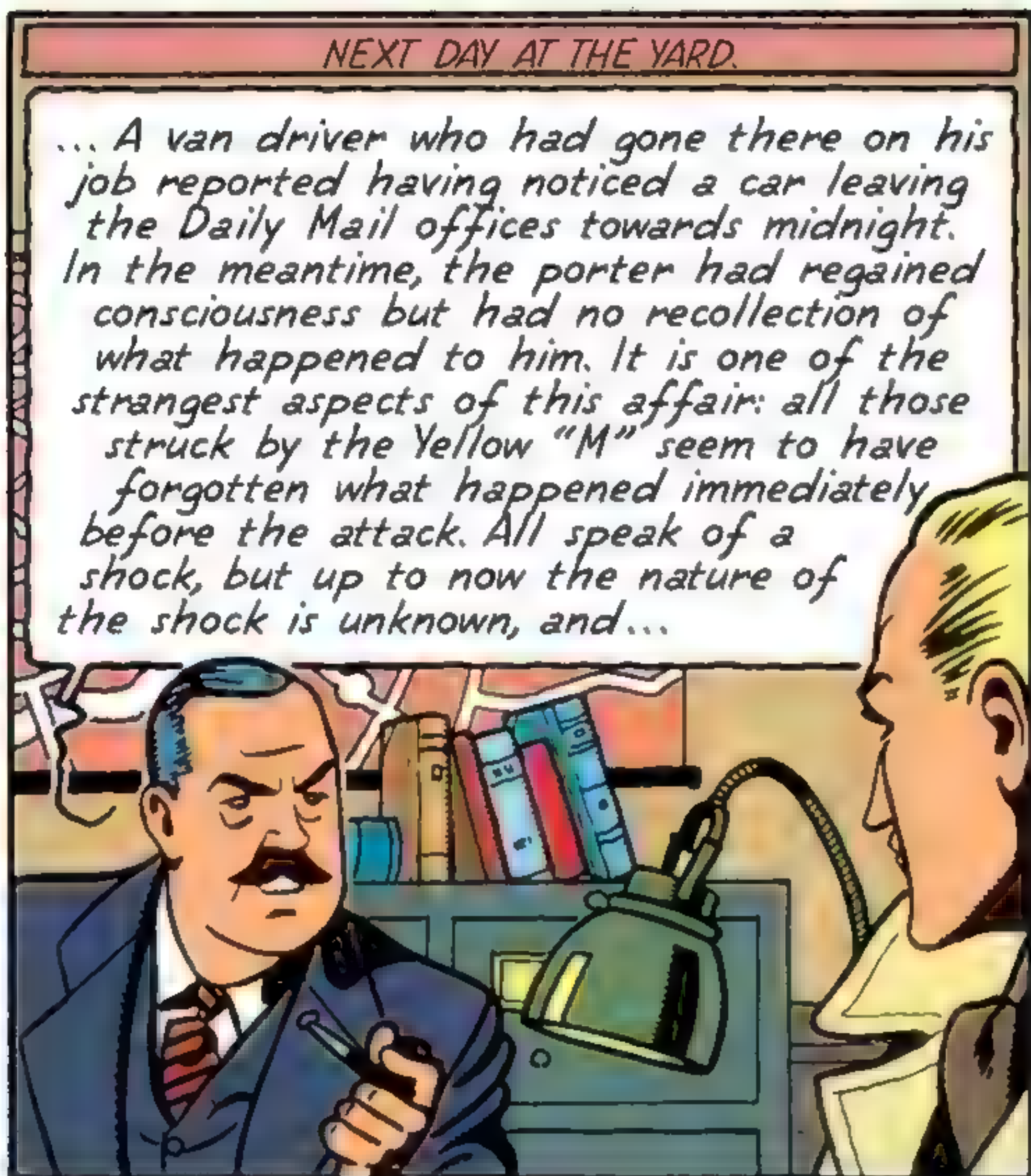
Hallo, Steve! As quickly as you can! Have a special edition prepared, large headlines. "Yellow "M" attacks again!..."

LEAVING THE DAILY MAIL HIVE OF ACTIVITY, BLAKE AND MORTIMER ARE SOON OUT IN THE STREET AGAIN.

For Macomber, it's only a chance to put out another special edition. But for someone else, it could be death. How ironic!!

Indubitably. What is not so amusing is that postscript that concerns us!





EVENING THE SAME DAY, IN FRONT OF THE JUDGE'S HOUSE.

I appeared as discreetly as possible, chief. Nevertheless, the old man seemed furious.

He will be even more so in a moment. It's a pity, but we can't run any risks.

Yes, my dear, in spite of my express wishes, a policeman has followed me all afternoon. At this very moment, he is on duty outside our front door. It's intolerable.

But look here, Hugh, be reasonable! This has been done for your own good.

RRING

Excuse me, Sir Hugh. There's a gentleman from Scotland Yard asking to speak with you.

What! Kendall?... Why on earth?...

Come, come, my dear.

Well, Inspector, isn't it enough to have people followed? Must you keep them from dining as well?

I regret disturbing you again, Sir, but the superintendent considered the precautions taken inadequate and had a police inspector placed at Dr. Septimus's residence.

And he asks me as well to accept a police officer in my house. This is the limit!...

Forgive me, Sir Hugh, for insisting. You would greatly assist Scotland Yard by accepting.

THE VIGIL COMMENCES. AT SCOTLAND YARD, ALL SERVICES ARE ON FULL ALERT. AT REGULAR INTERVALS, KENDALL AND BERT MAKE THEIR REPORTS TO SIR CHARLES GARRISON, POLICE COMMISSIONER AND THE YARD CHIEF.

Nothing to report at Septimus's, and the same at Calvin's. Bert says that the doctor is quite nervous. My goodness, it's no wonder. Right. The next check is at midnight, so let's wait and see.

IT IS A QUARTER TO TWELVE. ALL IS QUIET IN JUDGE CALVIN'S HOUSE, WHEN SUDDENLY...

? BOOOM

Well, all right, then, as you wish. As for me, I am in the habit of spending the evening in the library. I hope Scotland Yard has no objection to that.

None at all, Sir. I'll make myself comfortable in the hall so as not to disturb you at all.

SPRINGING FROM HIS ARMCHAIR, KENDALL RUSHES INTO THE LIBRARY, PISTOL IN HAND...

Well, Inspector, since when do we enter without knocking?

I beg your pardon, Sir. I thought I heard a suspicious noise.

It was a log falling out of the fire into the hearth. Just a log, Inspector. Now get out of here and shut the door behind you!

AN APOLOGETIC KENDALL RETURNS TO HIS SEAT IN THE HALL AND HEARS THE KEY BEING FURIOUSLY TURNED IN THE LOCK BEHIND HIM. THE LONG WAIT GOES ON RELENTLESSLY. SUDDENLY, A FEW SECONDS BEFORE MIDNIGHT...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

What now?

What the dickens? That's it! Once for all, that wretched police fellow needs a shaking up!

WITH A VIOLENT GESTURE, THE JUDGE OPENS THE HALL DOOR, BUT AT THE SAME INSTANT...

HAHHHHH!!!

Y HERE

**The Clinic
Police**

Our corn
has been
home
the ni
befor
has
an
T



He's reviving again...

Do you feel able to

Oh, my head.

Hello, Kendall!...

I think I might
be able to. Lord!
Tell me whether...

Yes, old fellow, the judge has been kidnapped. Take it easy... Just try and tell us exactly what happened...

A close-up illustration of a man with a mustache, looking distressed or angry, with his hand on his forehead. He has a serious expression, with furrowed brows and a slight frown. He is wearing a red and white striped shirt. The background is a simple yellow and white pattern.

No clue, as usual. It's all very trying. It means that if the situation doesn't soon improve, we'll have the entire press on our backs, and then... Anyhow, can I drop you somewhere?

Thank you, Sir
Charles. I think the
professor and
I would prefer to
walk a little...

Between you and me, Philip, I'm not very proud of my efforts. Three kidnappings since I took over. It's becoming much too serious. We must do everything to prevent another. I'm going to see Septimus, who must be half dead with fright. Are you coming with me?

I'm sorry, old chap...

... I have to go to the Daily Mail offices. You know I'm getting very friendly with their records man.

Hmm... You're making a great mystery of everything. What are you up to?

Well, you see, I've got sort of the start of an idea, but it's still so hazy, maybe crazy, that I'm not very keen on looking ridiculous by talking about it for the time being.

Good day, Patrick,
anything new?

No, Sir, except this letter, which
a messenger gave me for you.

What on earth?...

Good heavens!

DEAR MISTER BLAKE,
A WORD OF ADVICE: KEEP OUT OF
THIS AFFAIR! ...
A FRIEND WHO WISHES
YOU WELL.

THEN, SUDDENLY, WHILE HE IS STILL STUDYING THE INSOLENT MESSAGE, THERE IS A SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS FOLLOWED BY A HARSH CRY FROM THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE, WHICH STARTLES HIM...

BING! BANG
HAAA!





BLAKE DASHES UP THE STEPS IN TWO STRIDES, FOLLOWED BY THE POLICEMAN, AND RINGS THE BELL...



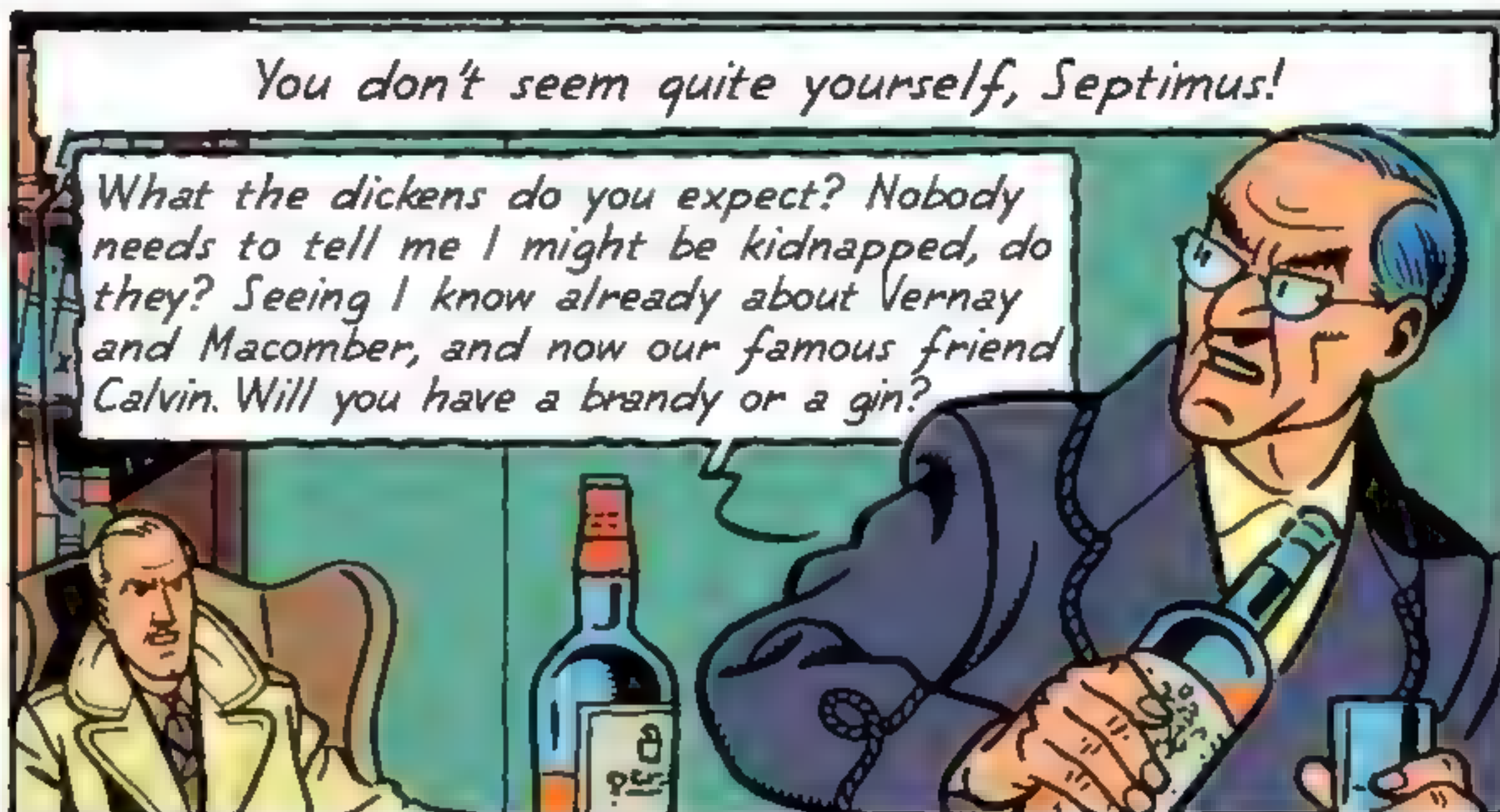
THE DOOR SOON OPENS AND DR. SEPTIMUS APPEARS. HE IS UNSTEADY ON HIS FEET.

What's happening here?

What do you mean?

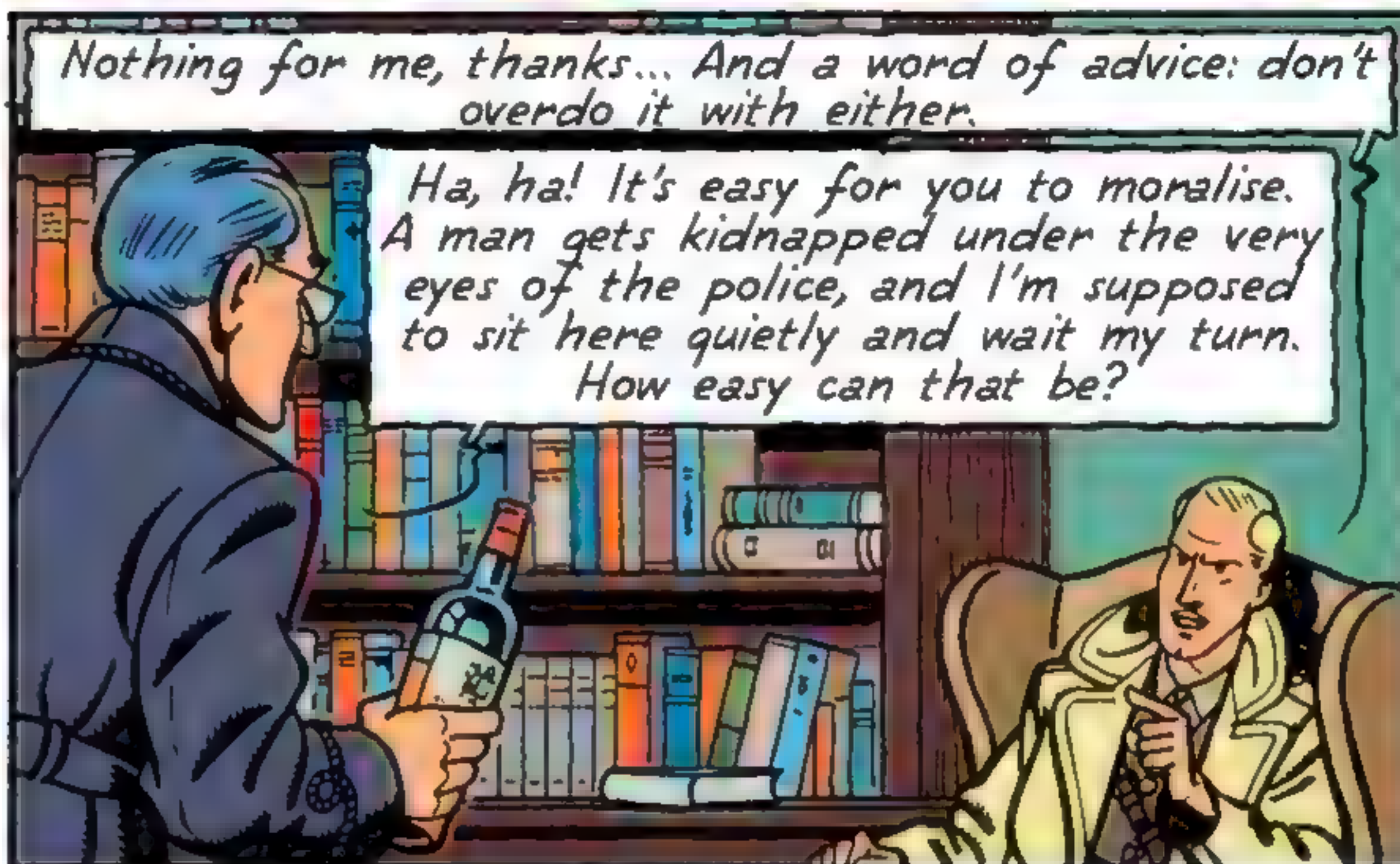


Oh, well, yes! Not to worry, old man... Just a bottle of whisky, knocked over by that idiot, Guinea Pig. You must admit, it's worth getting upset over. But do come in instead of staring at me like that. It's so cold.



You don't seem quite yourself, Septimus!

What the dickens do you expect? Nobody needs to tell me I might be kidnapped, do they? Seeing I know already about Vernay and Macomber, and now our famous friend Calvin. Will you have a brandy or a gin?

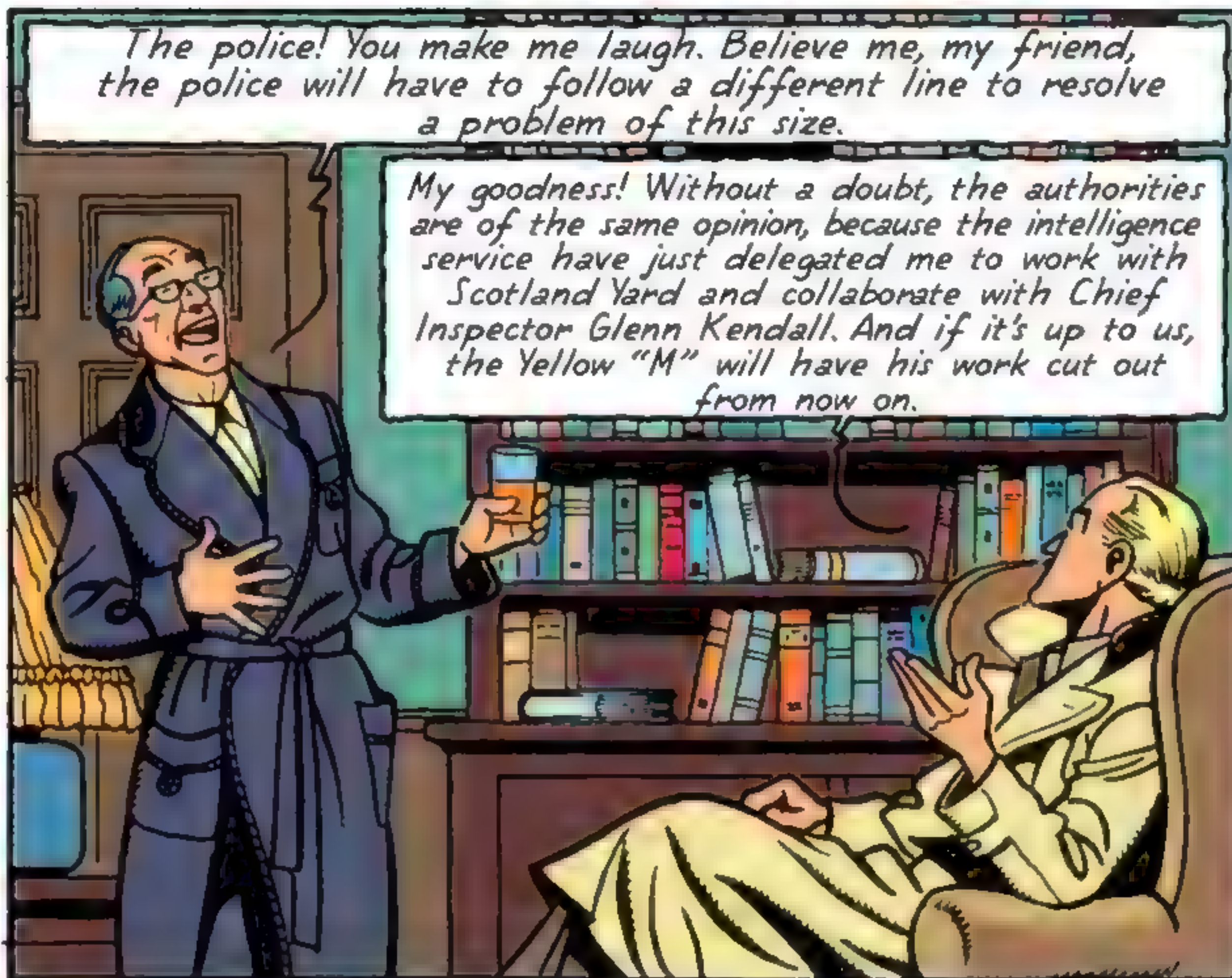


Nothing for me, thanks... And a word of advice: don't overdo it with either.

Ha, ha! It's easy for you to moralise. A man gets kidnapped under the very eyes of the police, and I'm supposed to sit here quietly and wait my turn. How easy can that be?



I quite understand your state of mind, but this time the police will have gained experience and will take such precautions that—



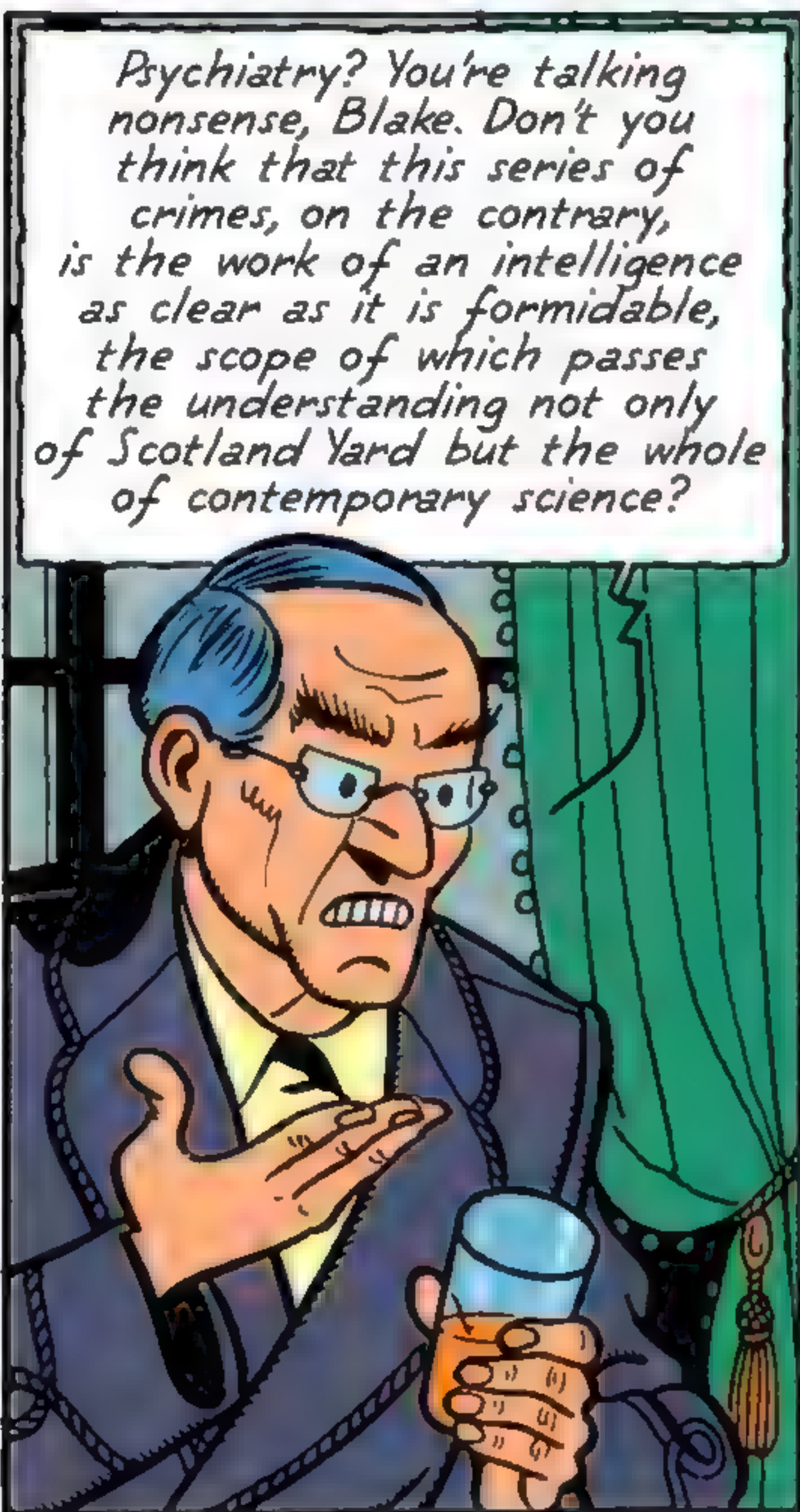
The police! You make me laugh. Believe me, my friend, the police will have to follow a different line to resolve a problem of this size.

My goodness! Without a doubt, the authorities are of the same opinion, because the intelligence service have just delegated me to work with Scotland Yard and collaborate with Chief Inspector Glenn Kendall. And if it's up to us, the Yellow "M" will have his work cut out from now on.

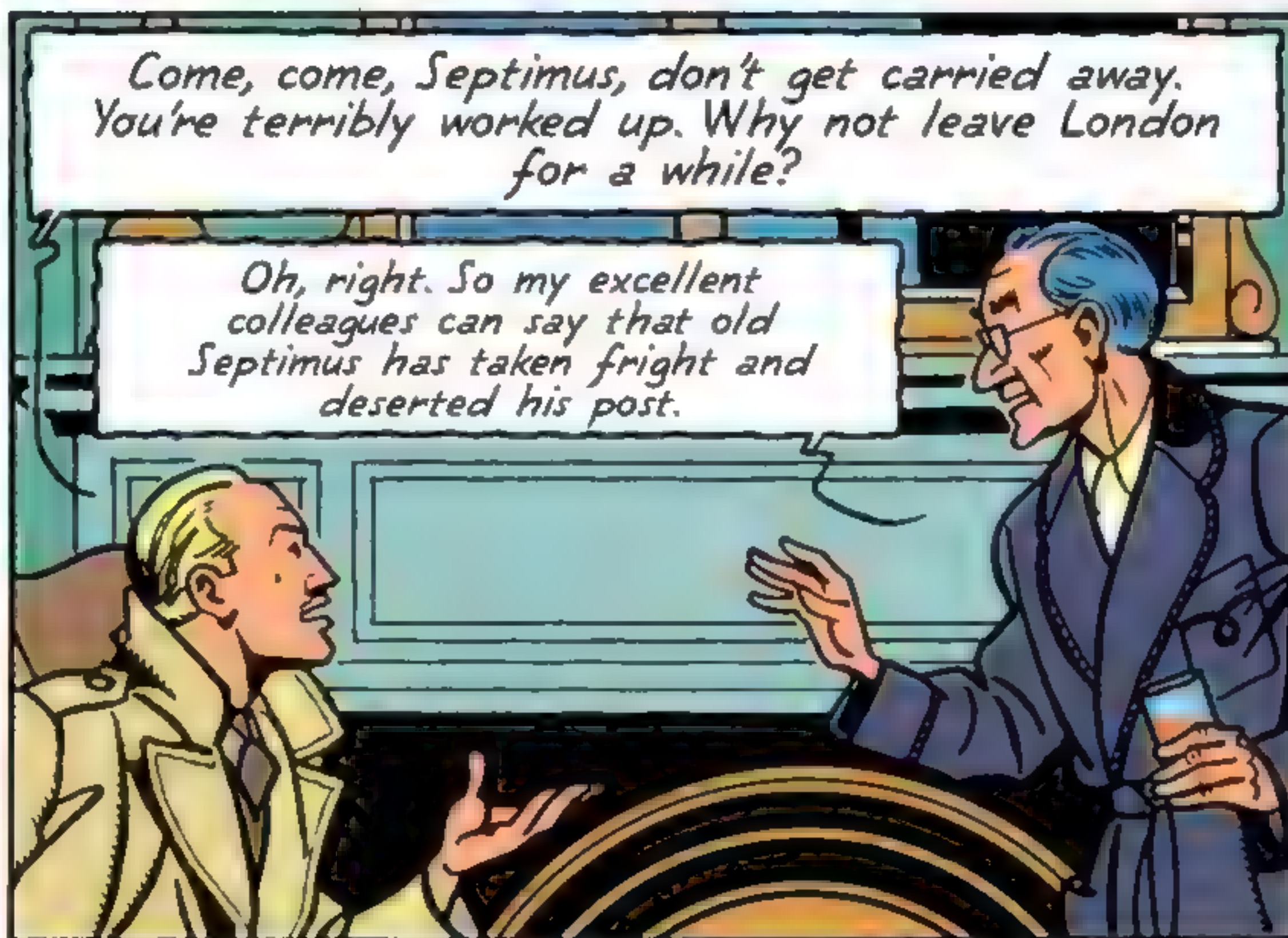


What, you? You're dealing with this affair? Well, congratulations!...

Oh, I don't get any glory out of it. First of all, it has been impossible for me to prevent the abduction of our friends, and secondly, the criminal who defies us is more a case for psychiatry than for justice.

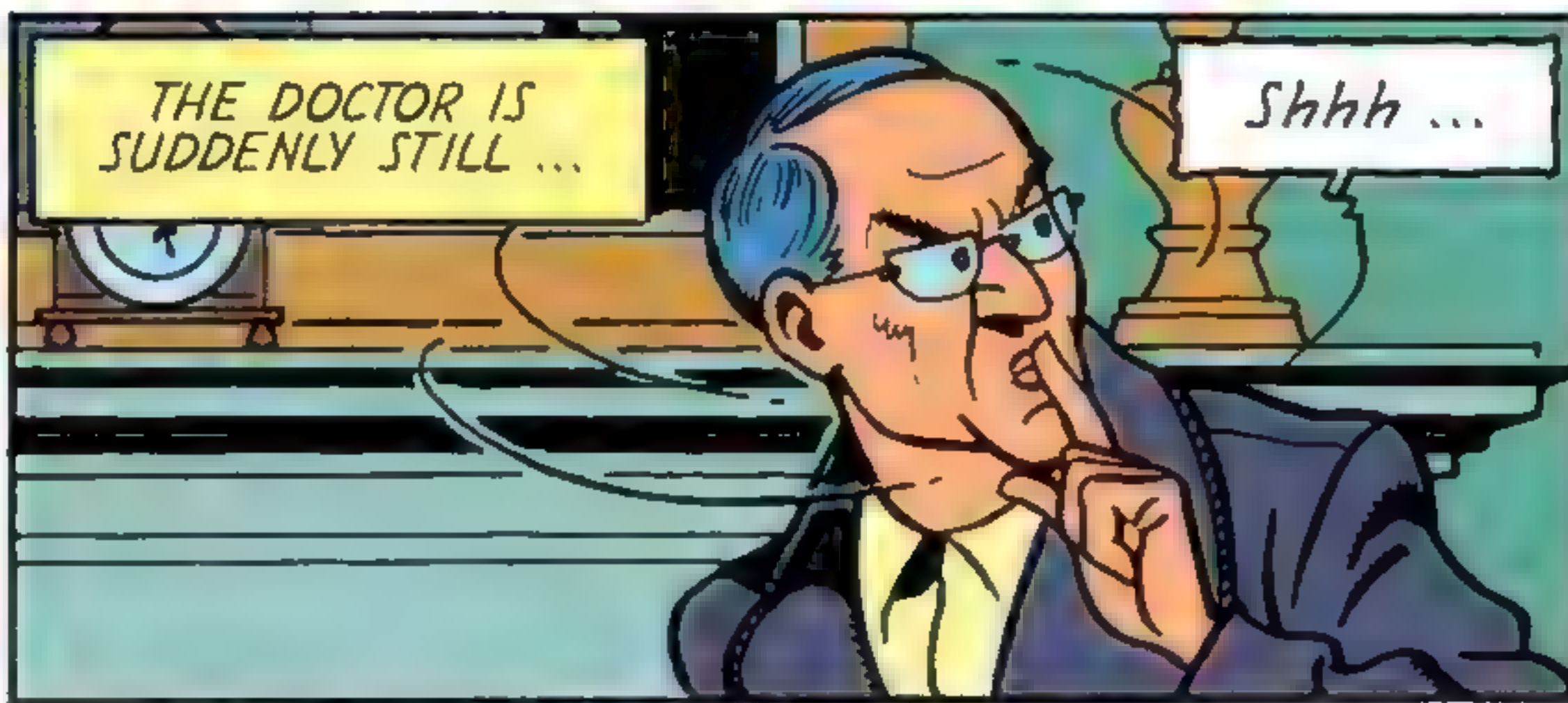


Psychiatry? You're talking nonsense, Blake. Don't you think that this series of crimes, on the contrary, is the work of an intelligence as clear as it is formidable, the scope of which passes the understanding not only of Scotland Yard but the whole of contemporary science?



Come, come, Septimus, don't get carried away. You're terribly worked up. Why not leave London for a while?

Oh, right. So my excellent colleagues can say that old Septimus has taken fright and deserted his post.

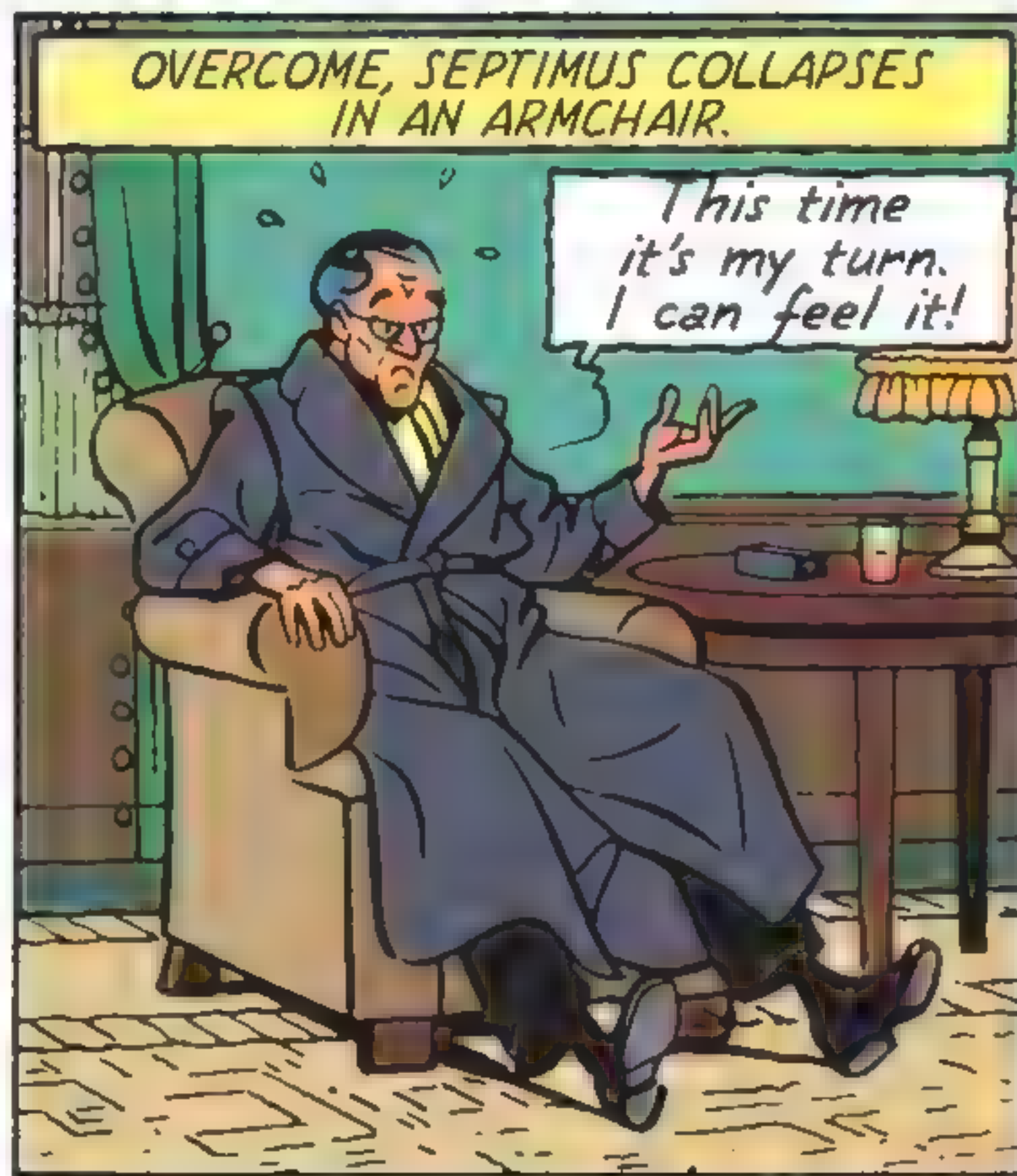
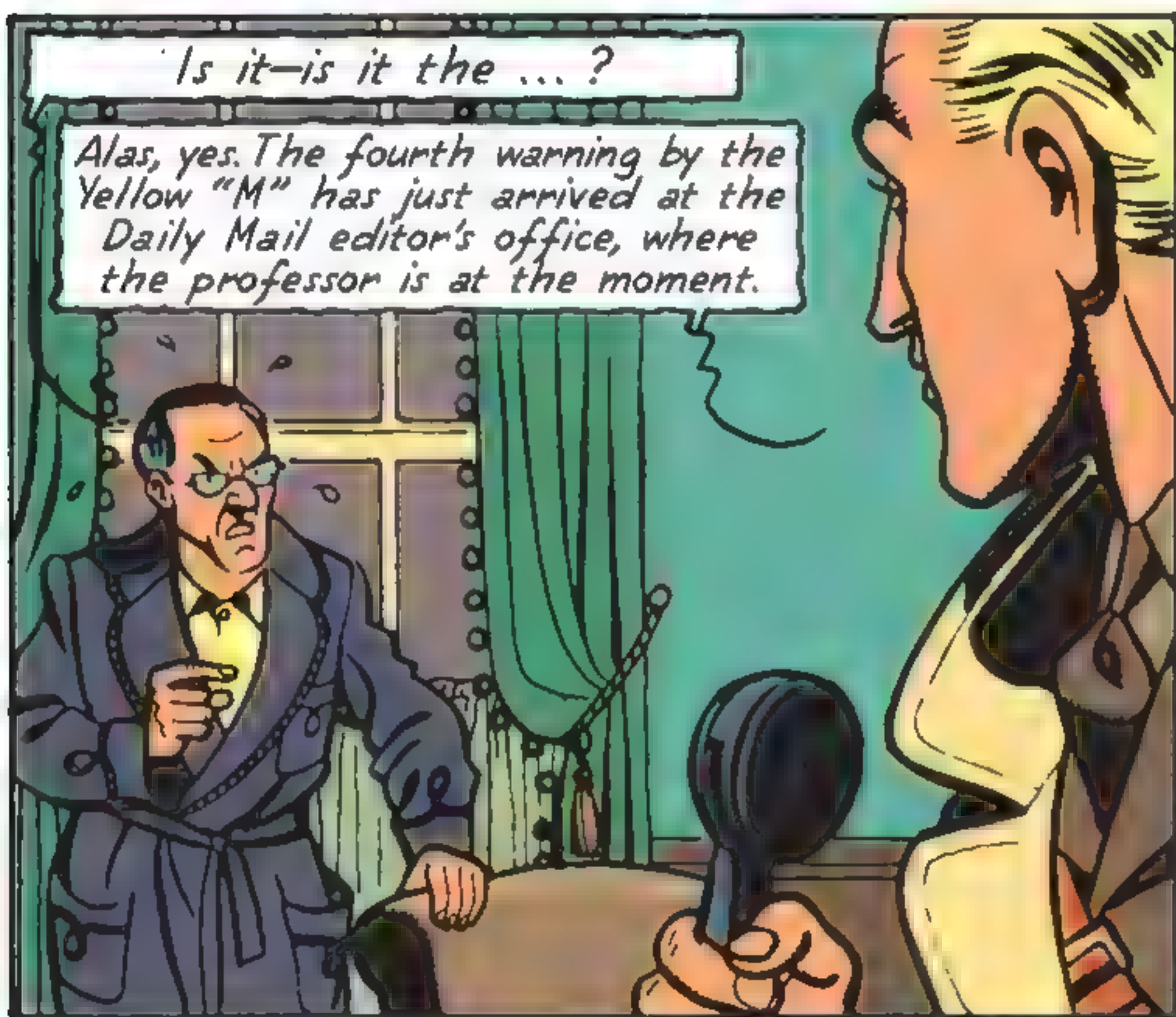
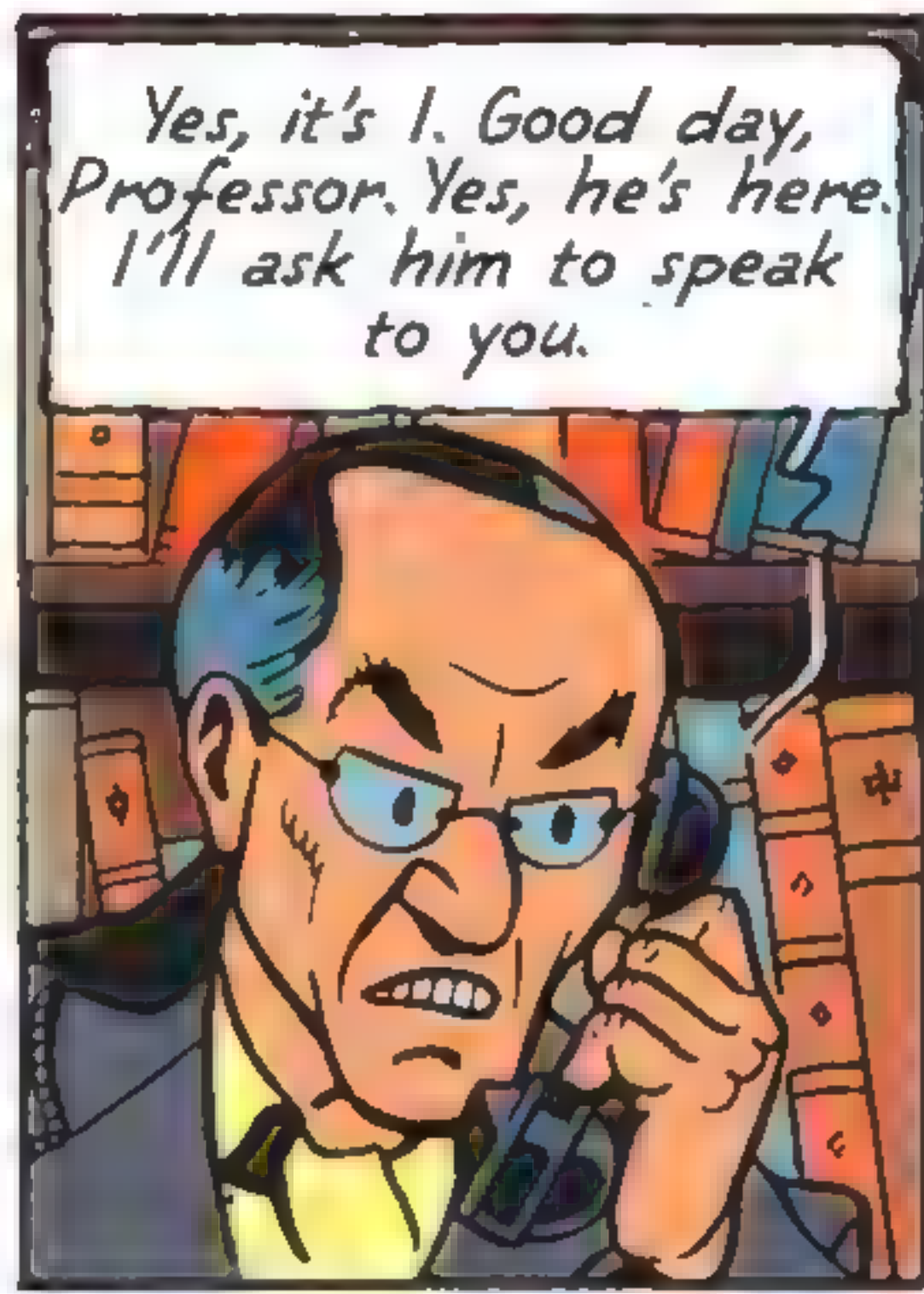
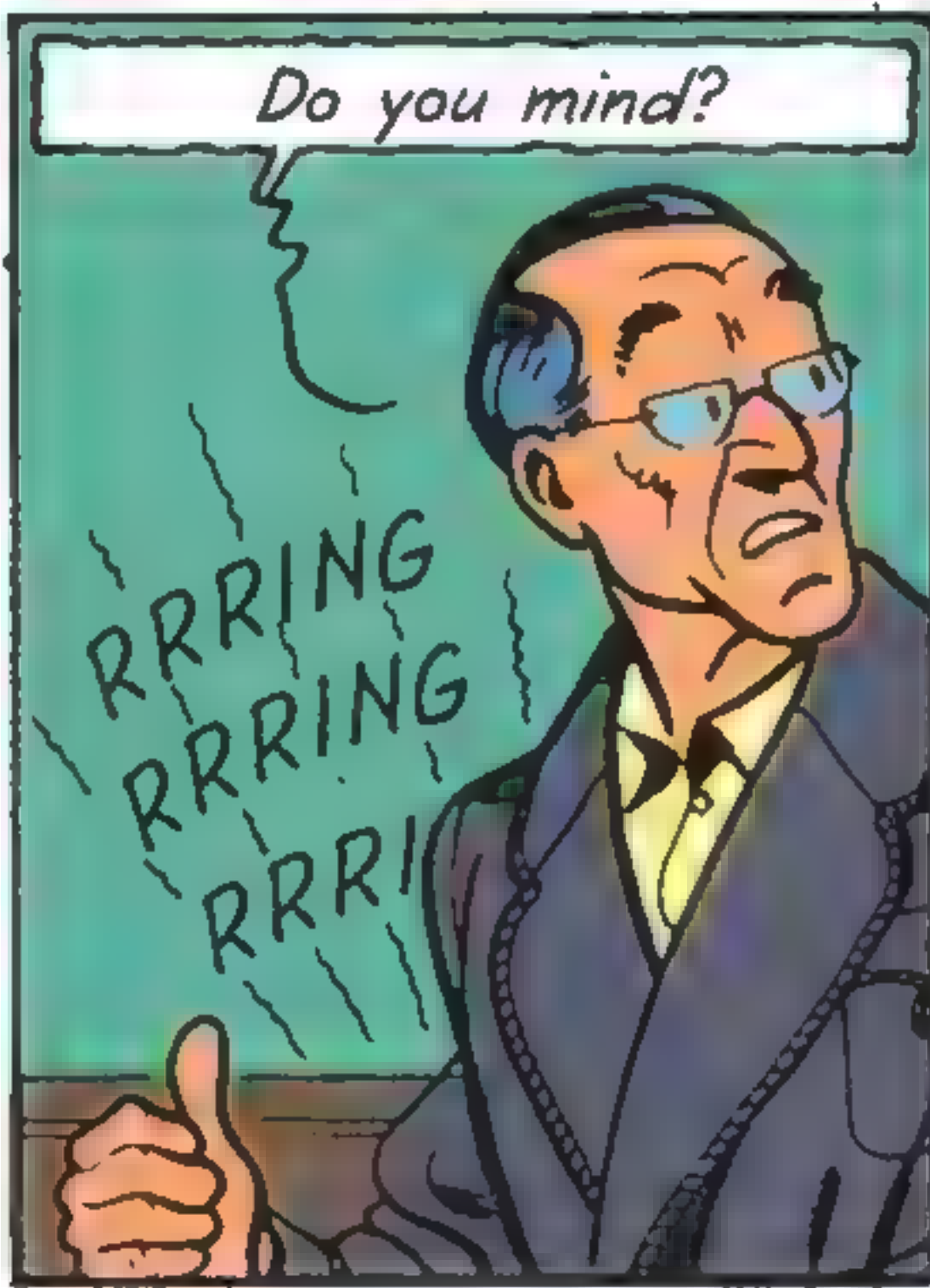
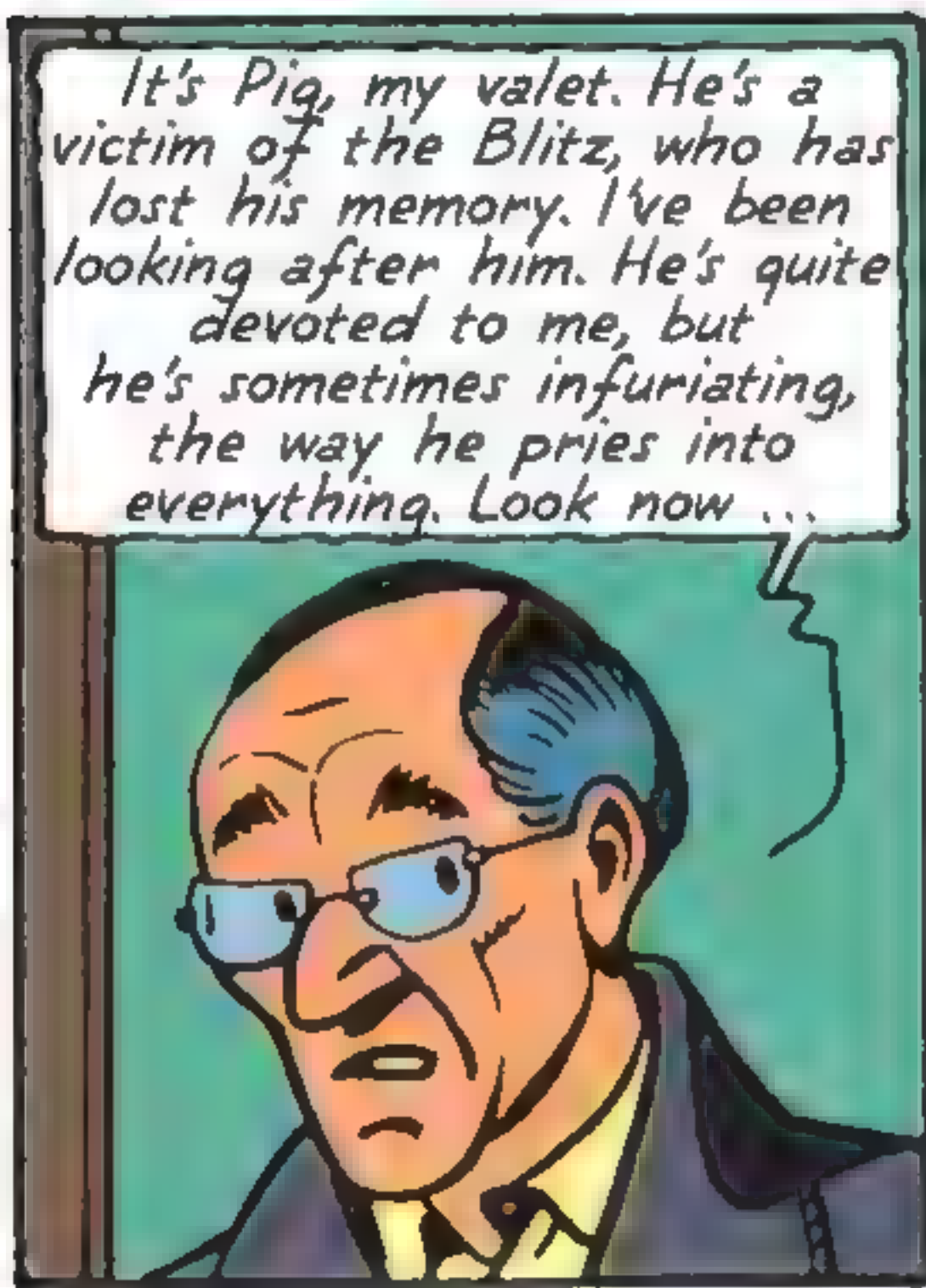


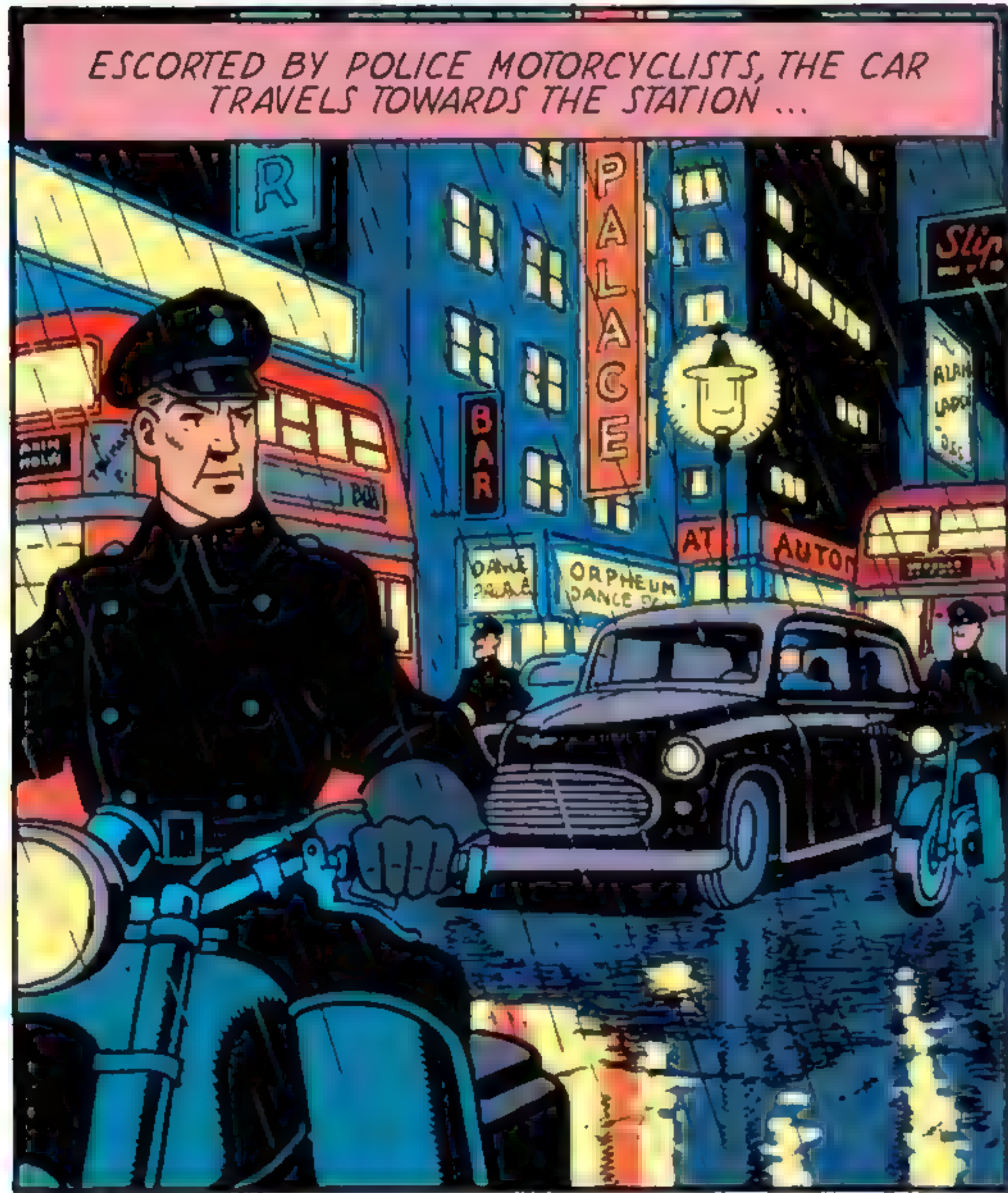
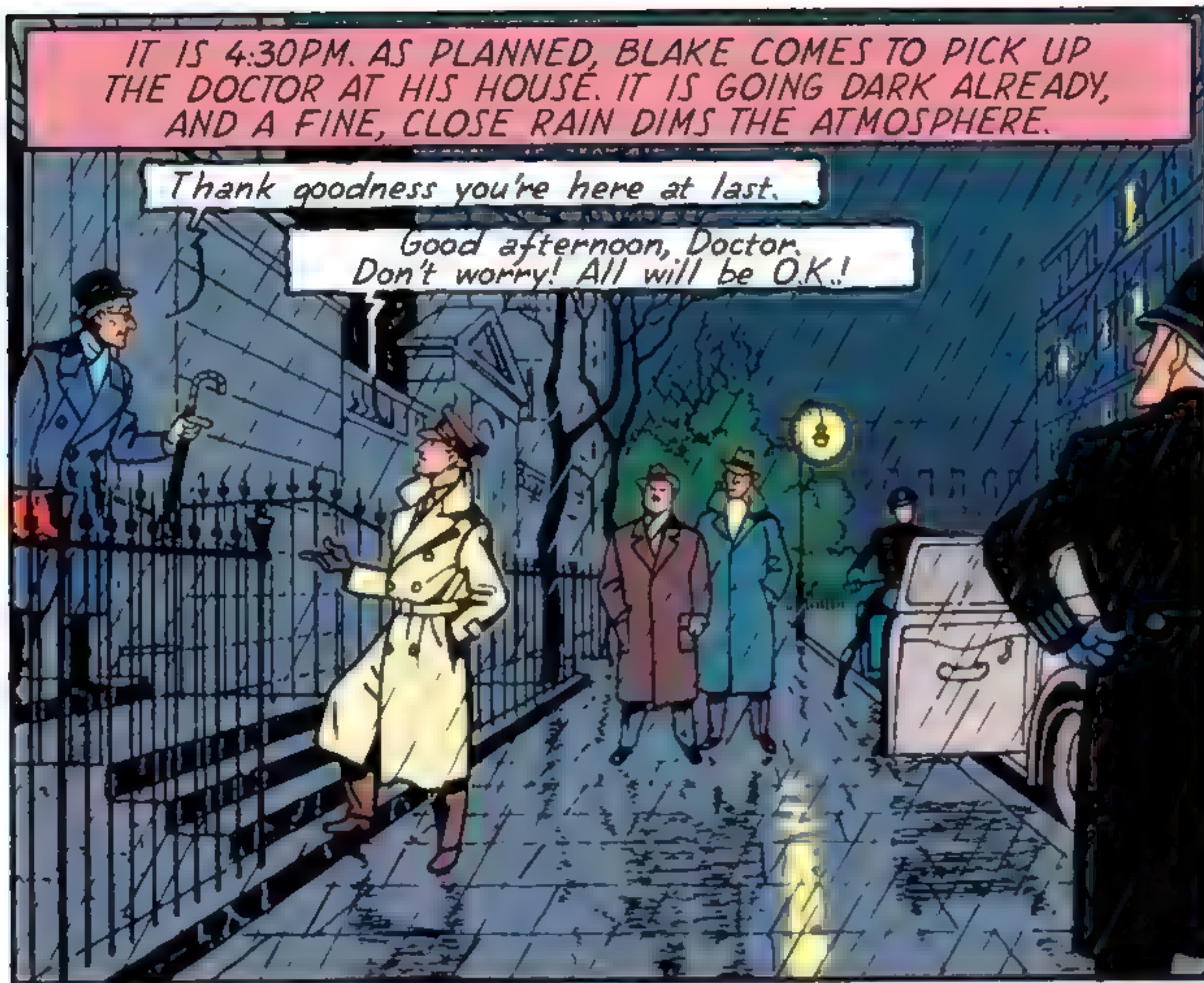
THE DOCTOR IS SUDDENLY STILL ...

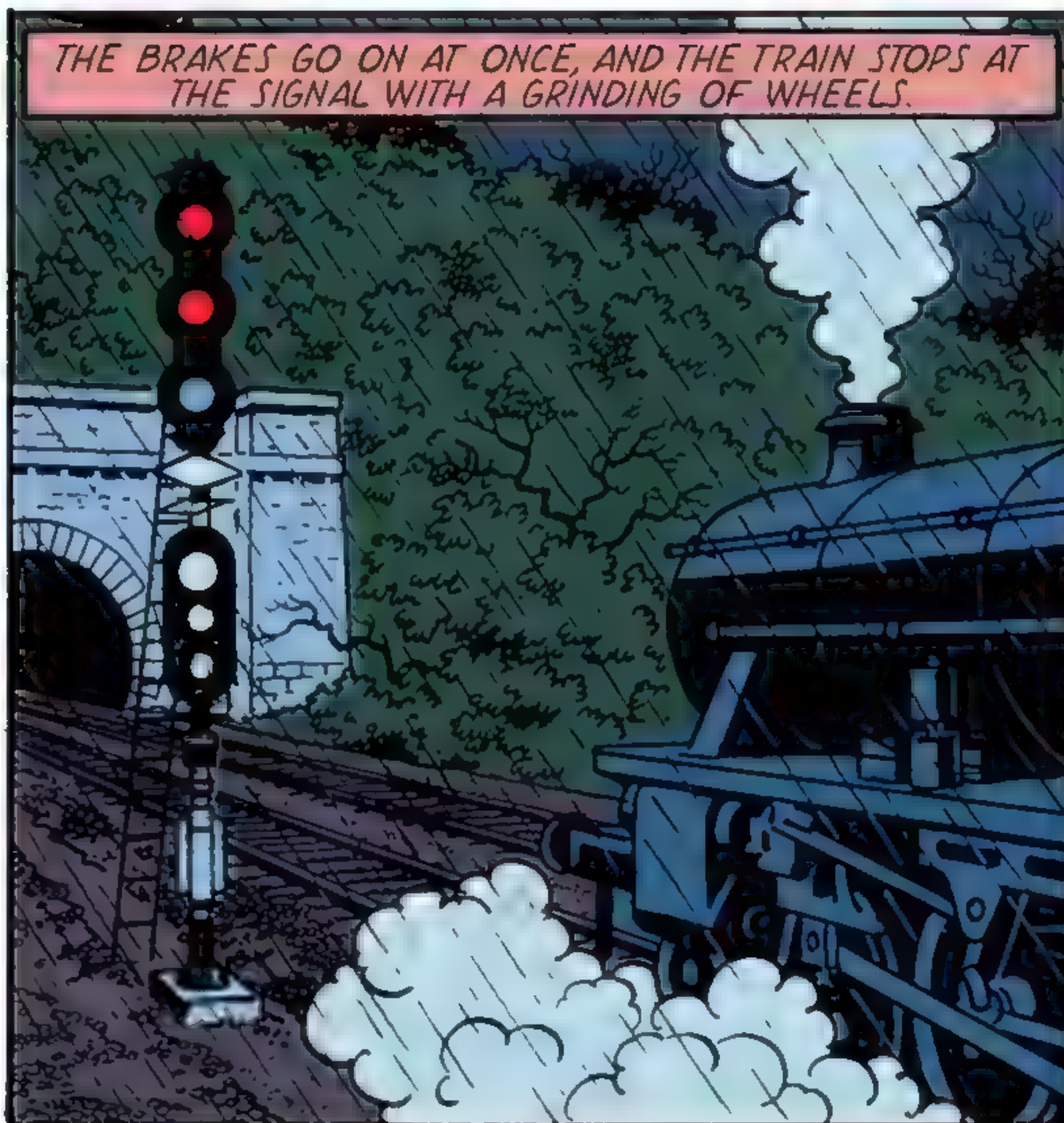
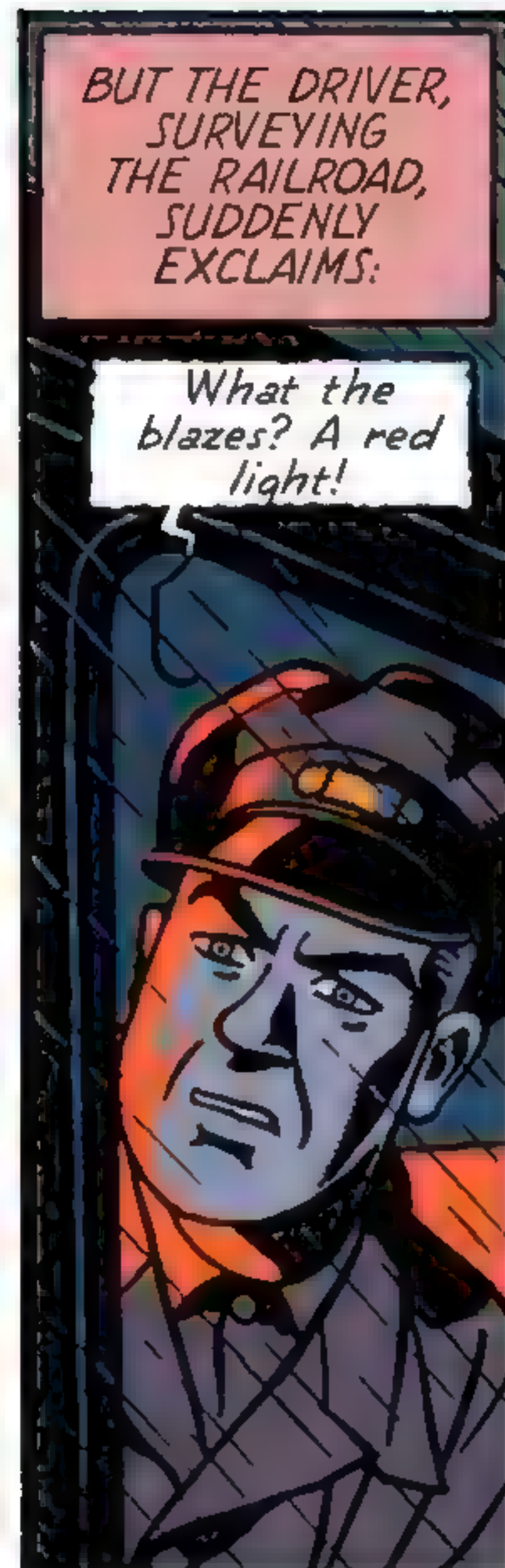
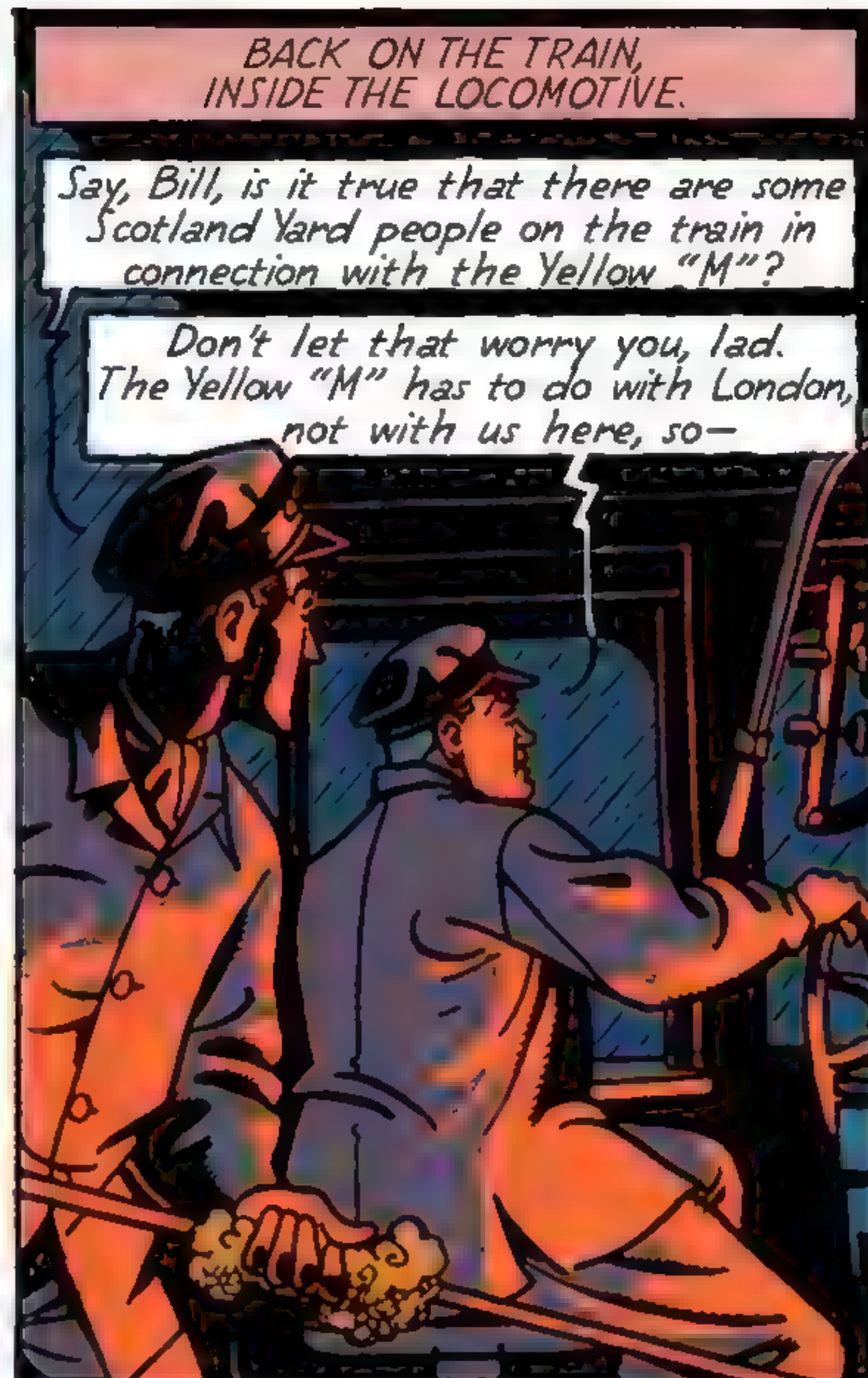
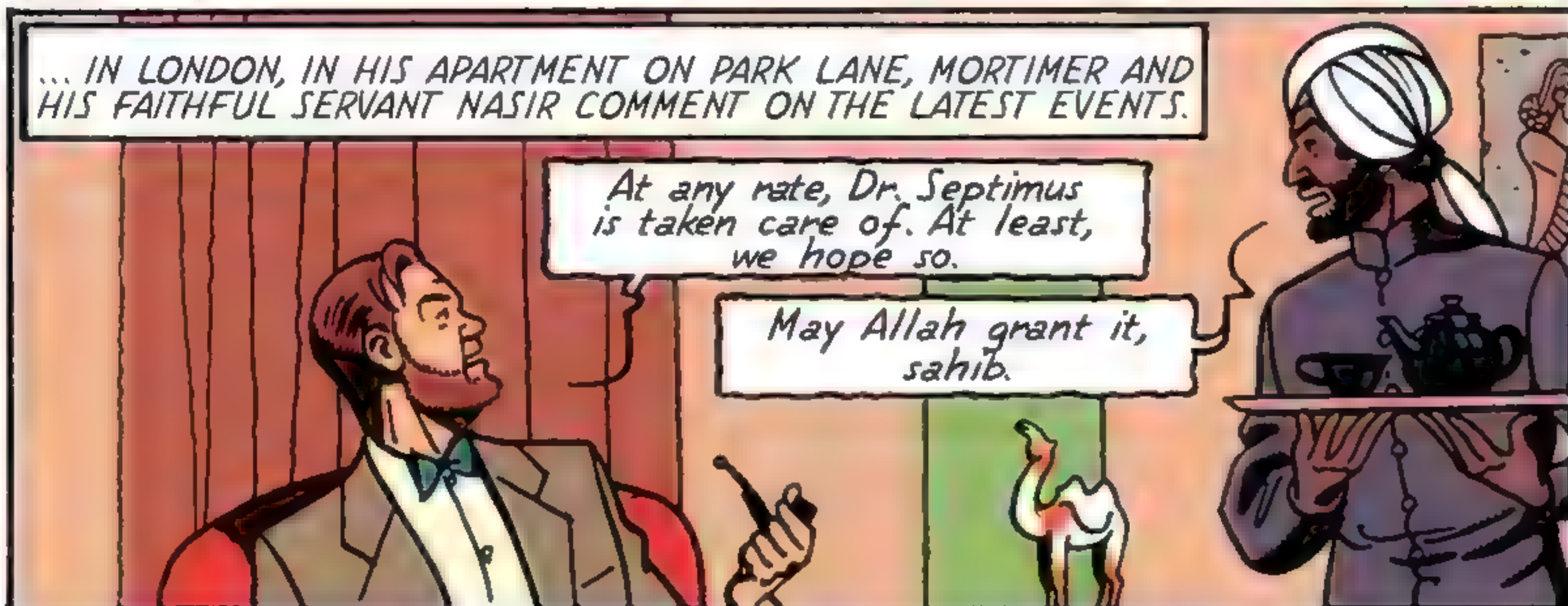
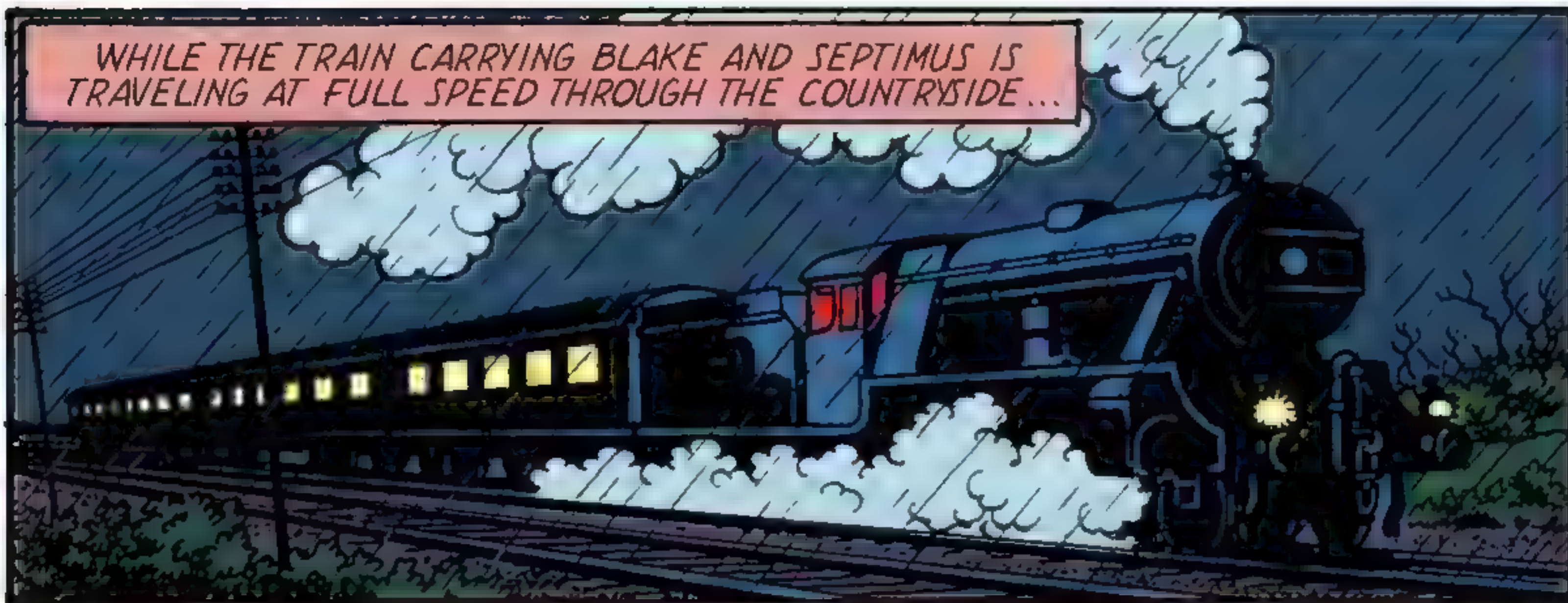
Shhh ...

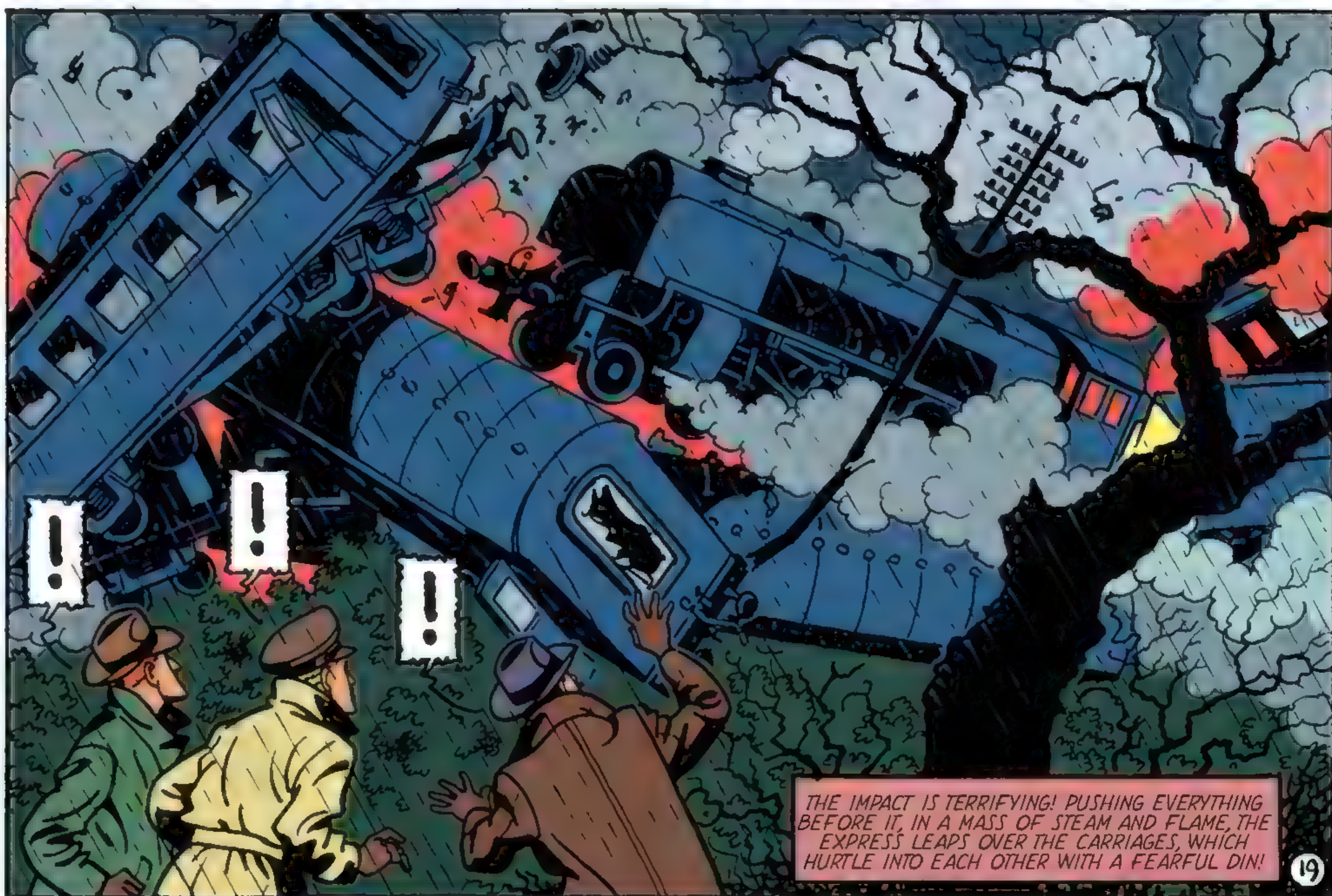
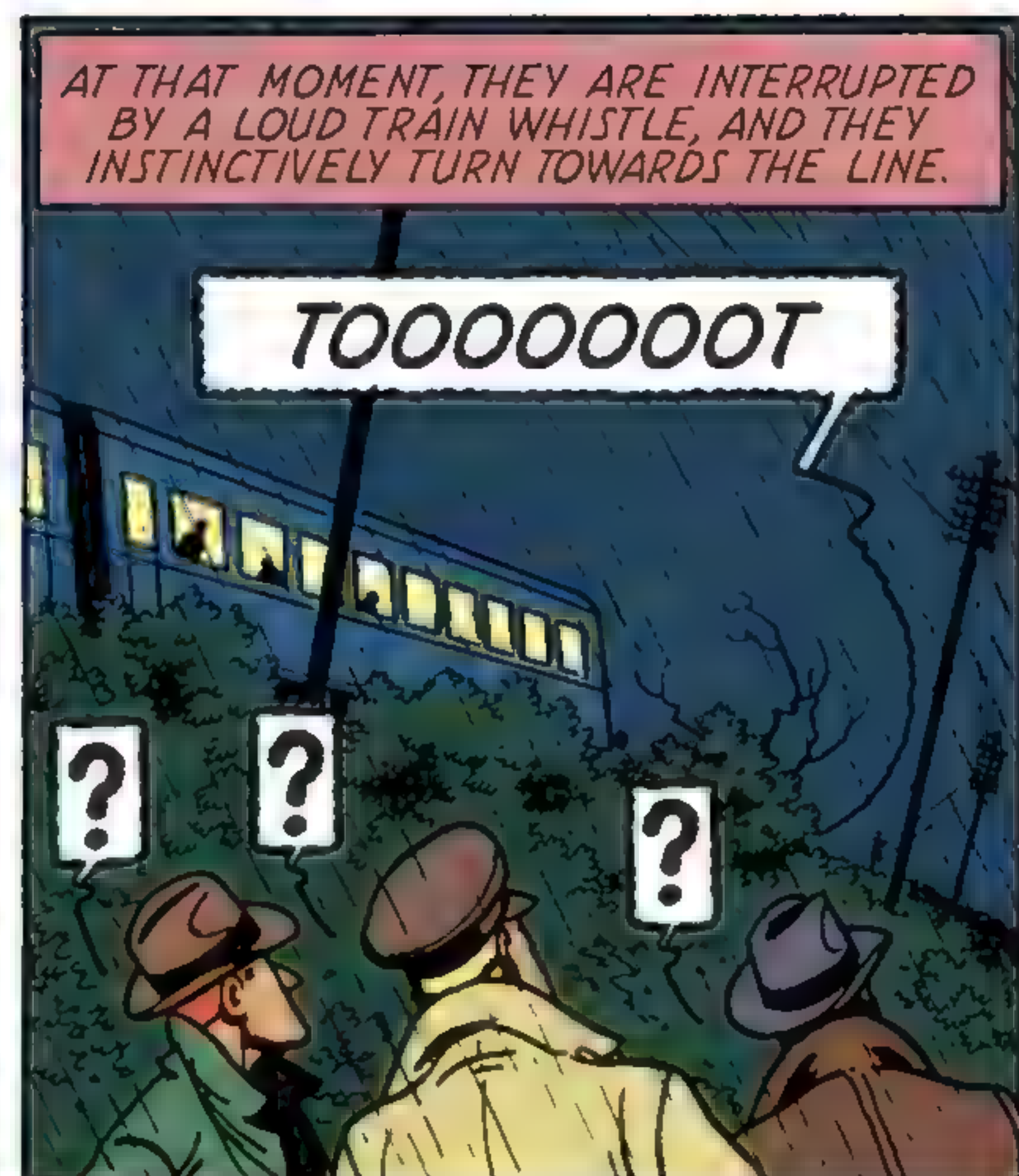
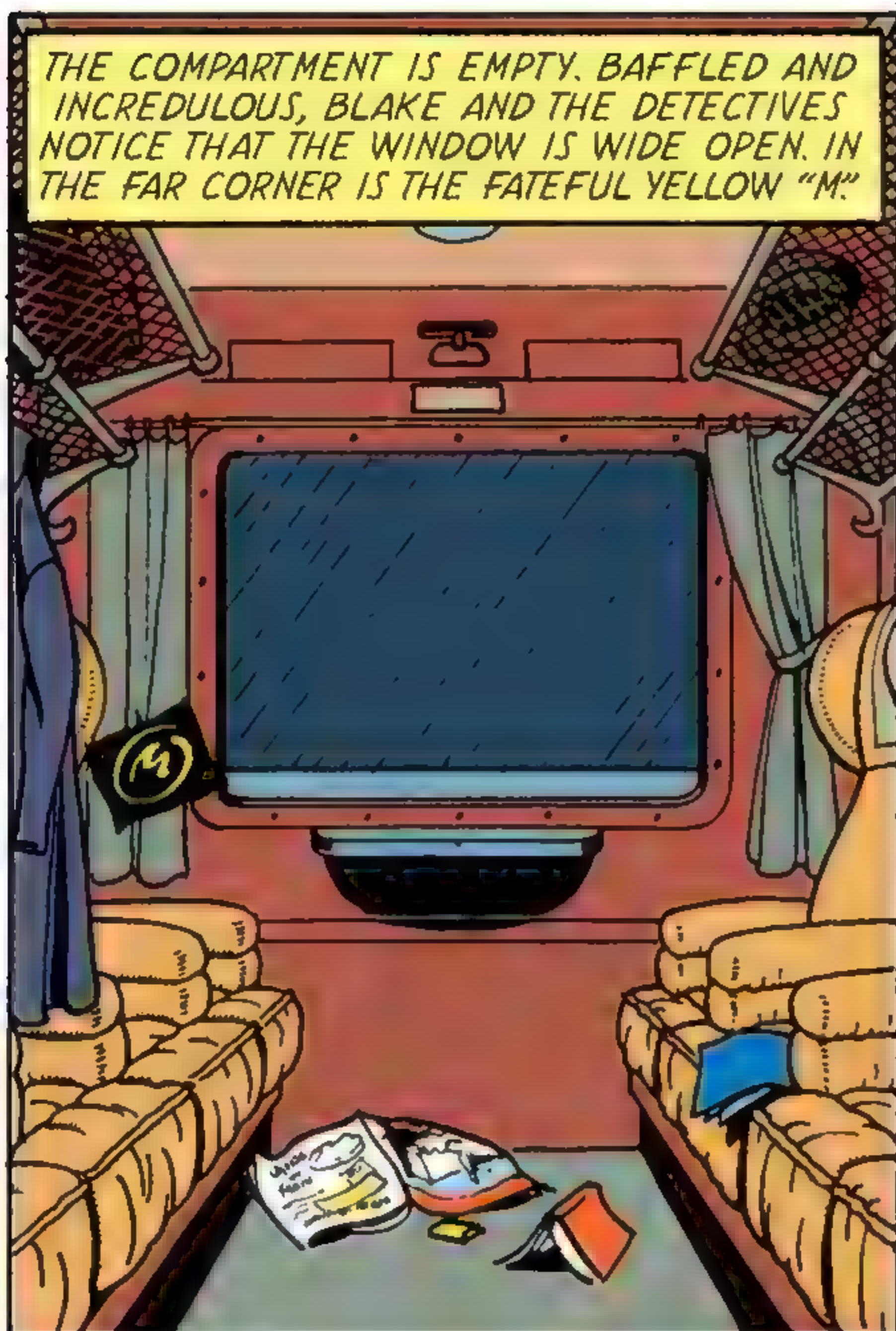


THEN, ABRUPTLY SEIZING A MALACCA CANE, HE RUSHES LIKE A MAD BULL TOWARDS THE HALL DOOR.











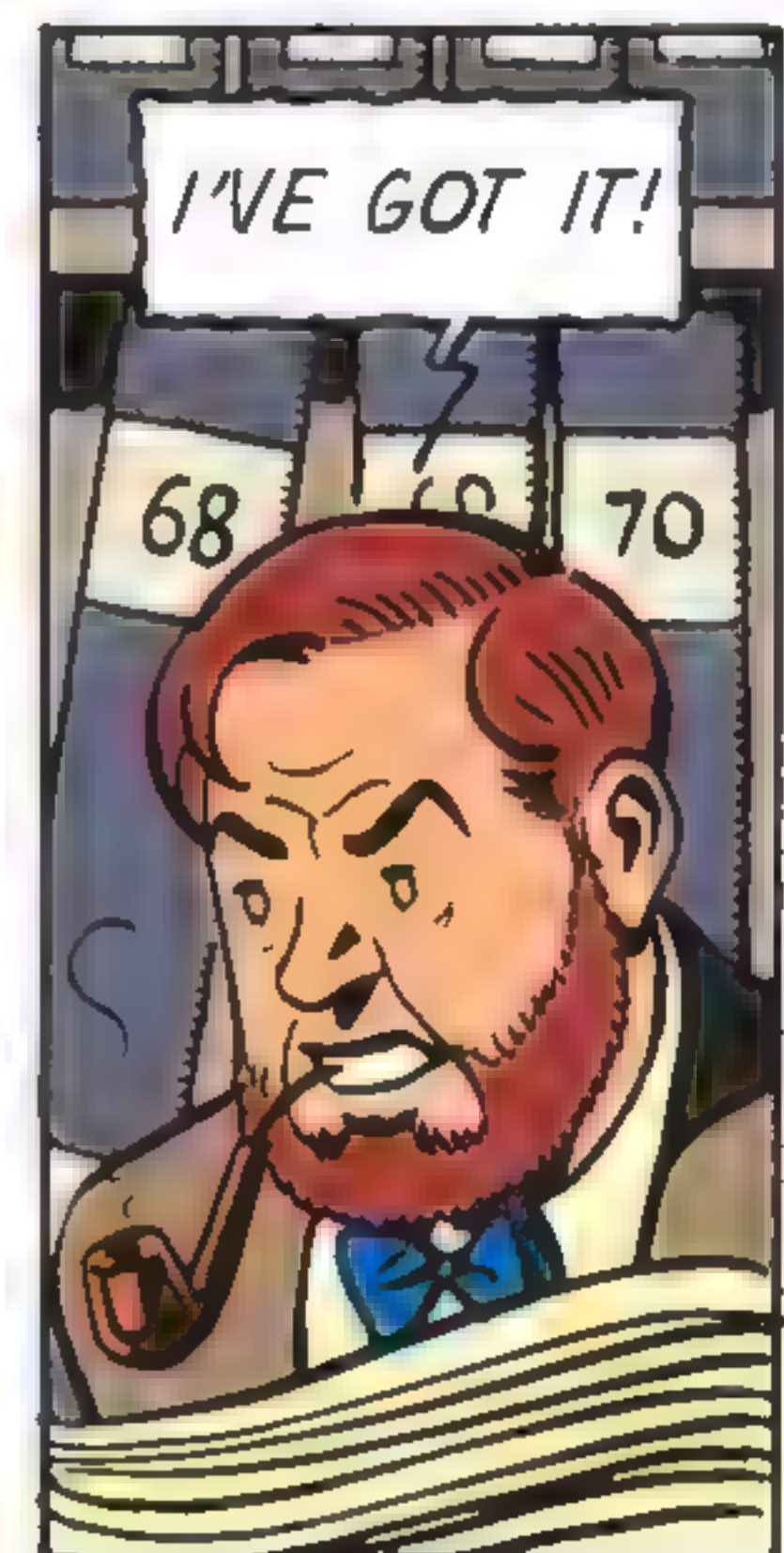
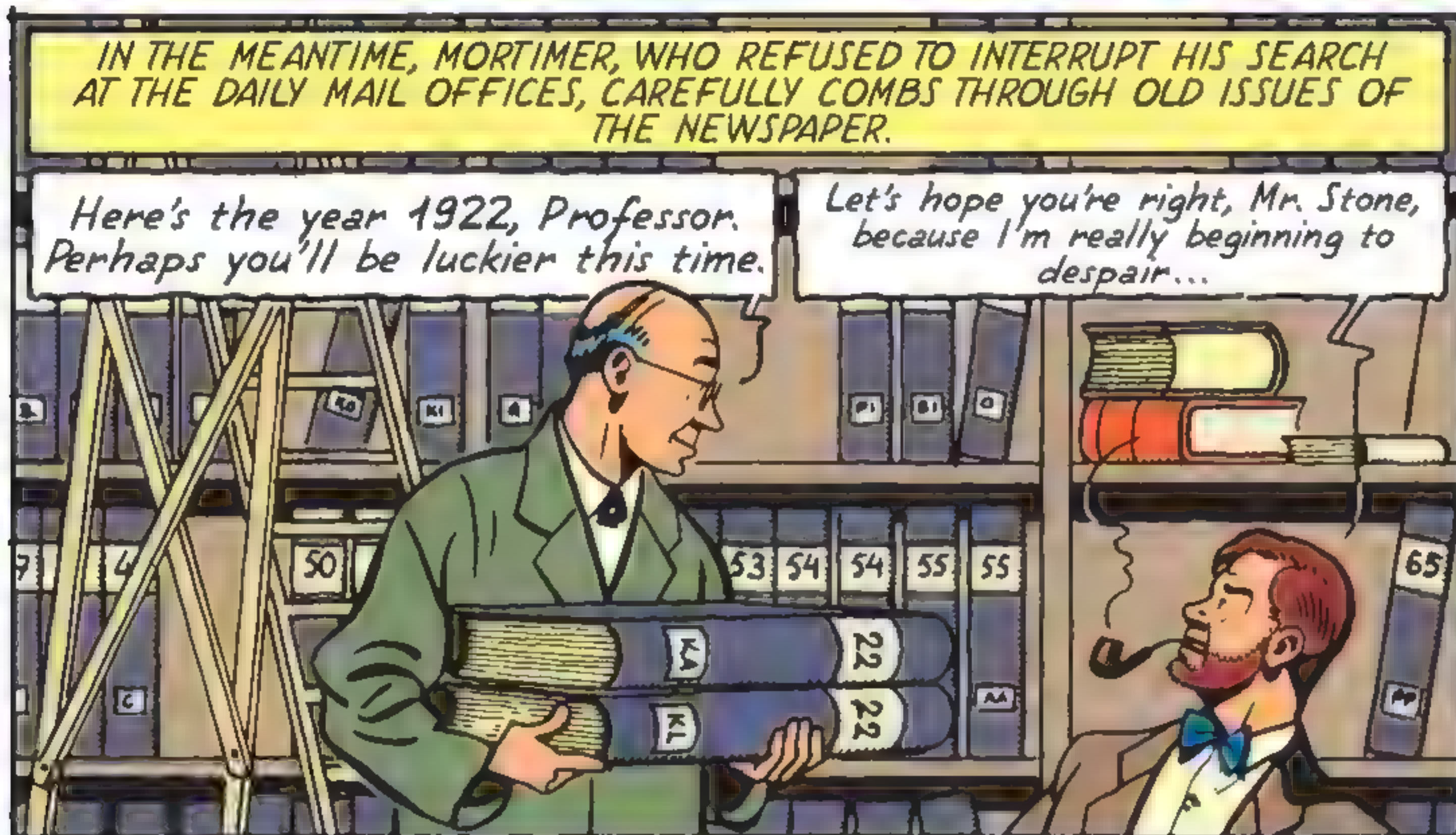
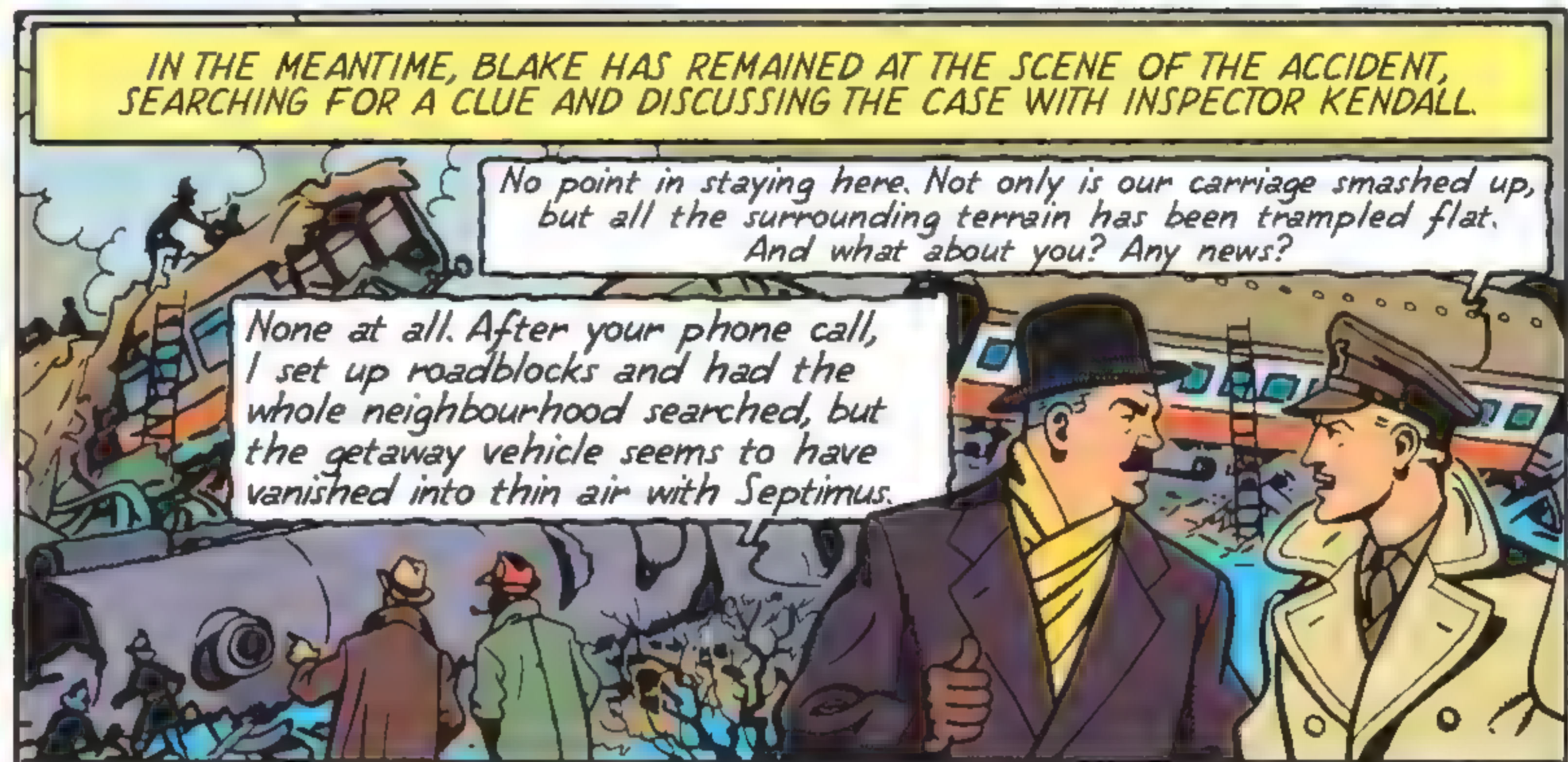
Nº 11431

KIDNAPPING OF DR. J. SEPTIMUS CAUSES TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE

IPSWICH EXPRESS COLLISION WITH SIGNAL

TRAIN FOLLOWING SABOTAGE OF SIGNAL

Night the 5.40pm train Chelmsford and Colchester about two miles from Witham While the train was stopped Dr Septimus was kidnapped by the Yellow "M," in spite



MORTIMER HAS JUST STOPPED AT A BIG HEADLINE READING:

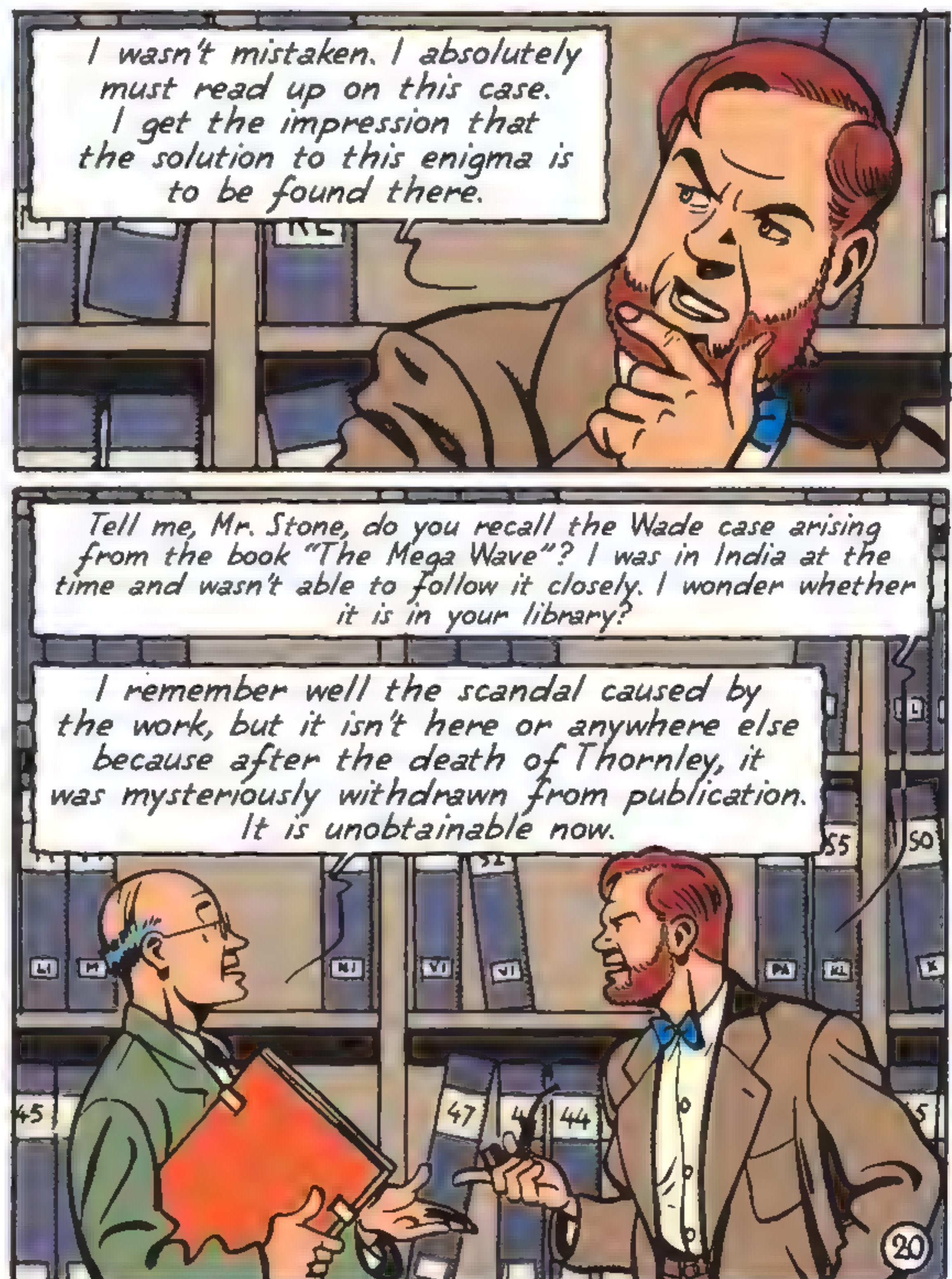
DRAMATIC CLIMAX IN WADE AFFAIR

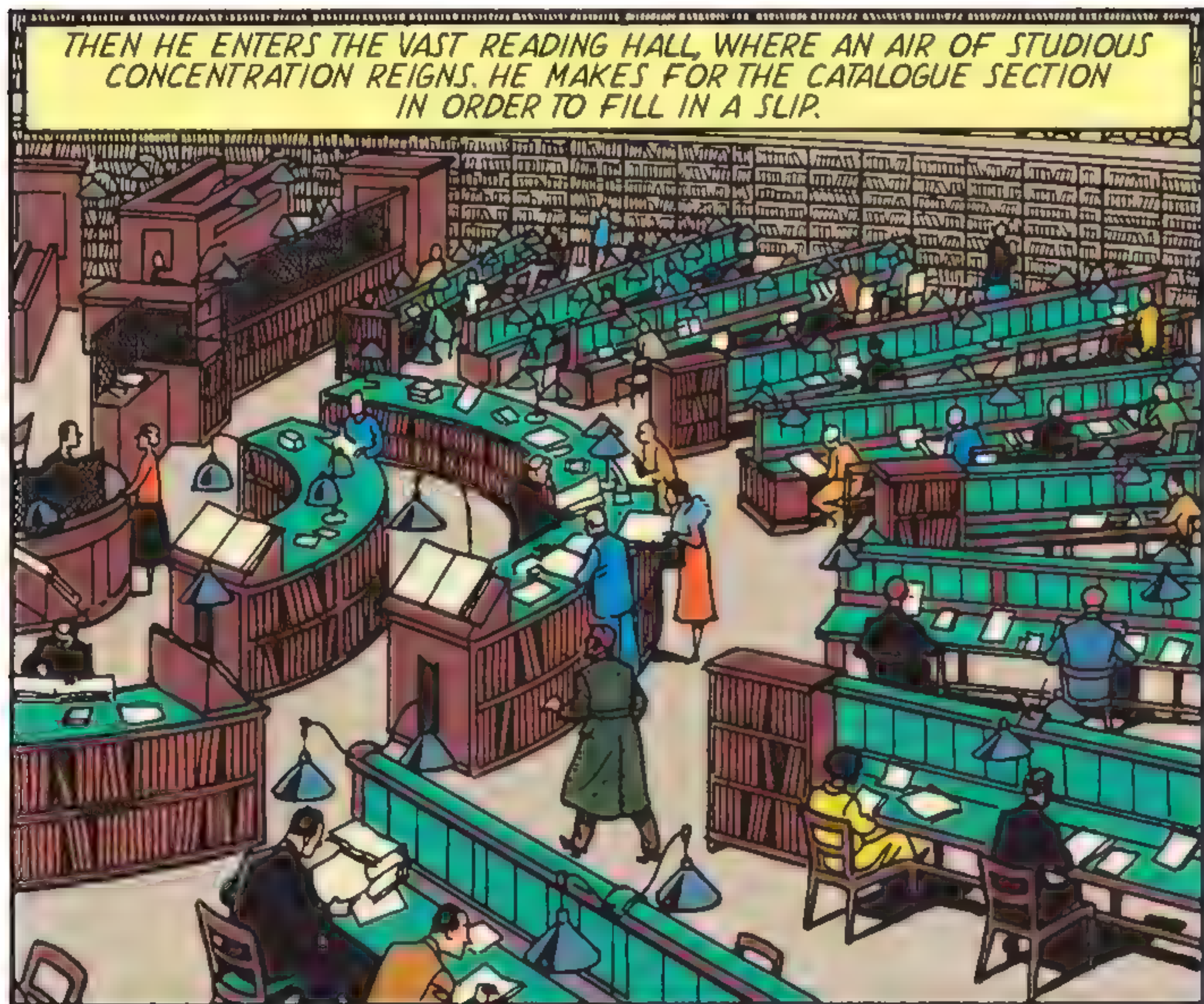
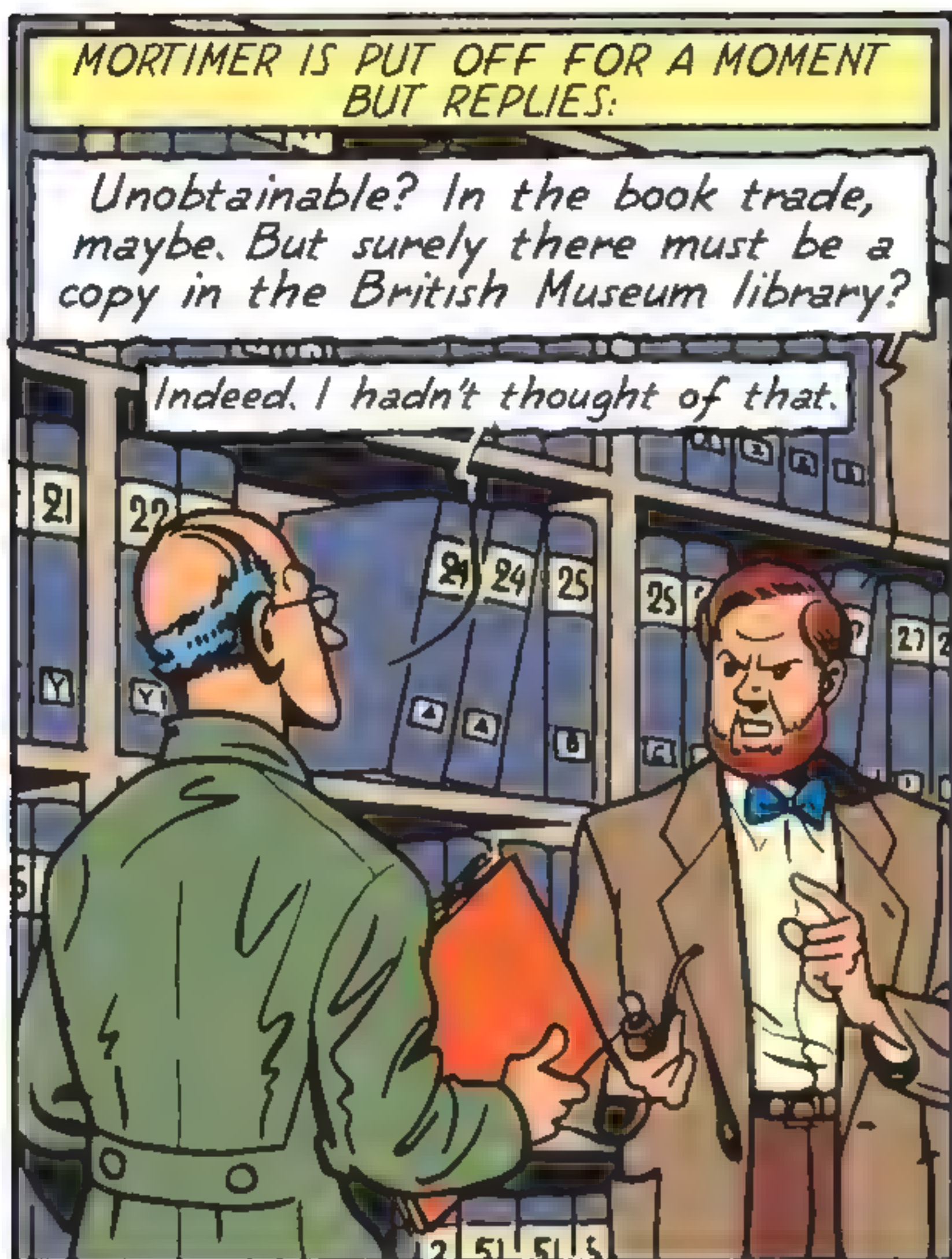
James Thornley, editor of "The Mega Wave" by Dr. Wade, loses libel case instituted against Dr. R. Vernay and journalist L. Macomber and is the victim of a stroke after the verdict is pronounced.

It will be remembered that following upon publication in Thornley editions of a book by Dr. John Wade, the young, brilliant Dr. R. Vernay wrote a stinging criticism of the work in the *Lancet* and L. Macomber, the well known writer of scientific articles in the *Daily Mail* followed this for several weeks with biting pleasantries on the same subject. Dr. Wade's book

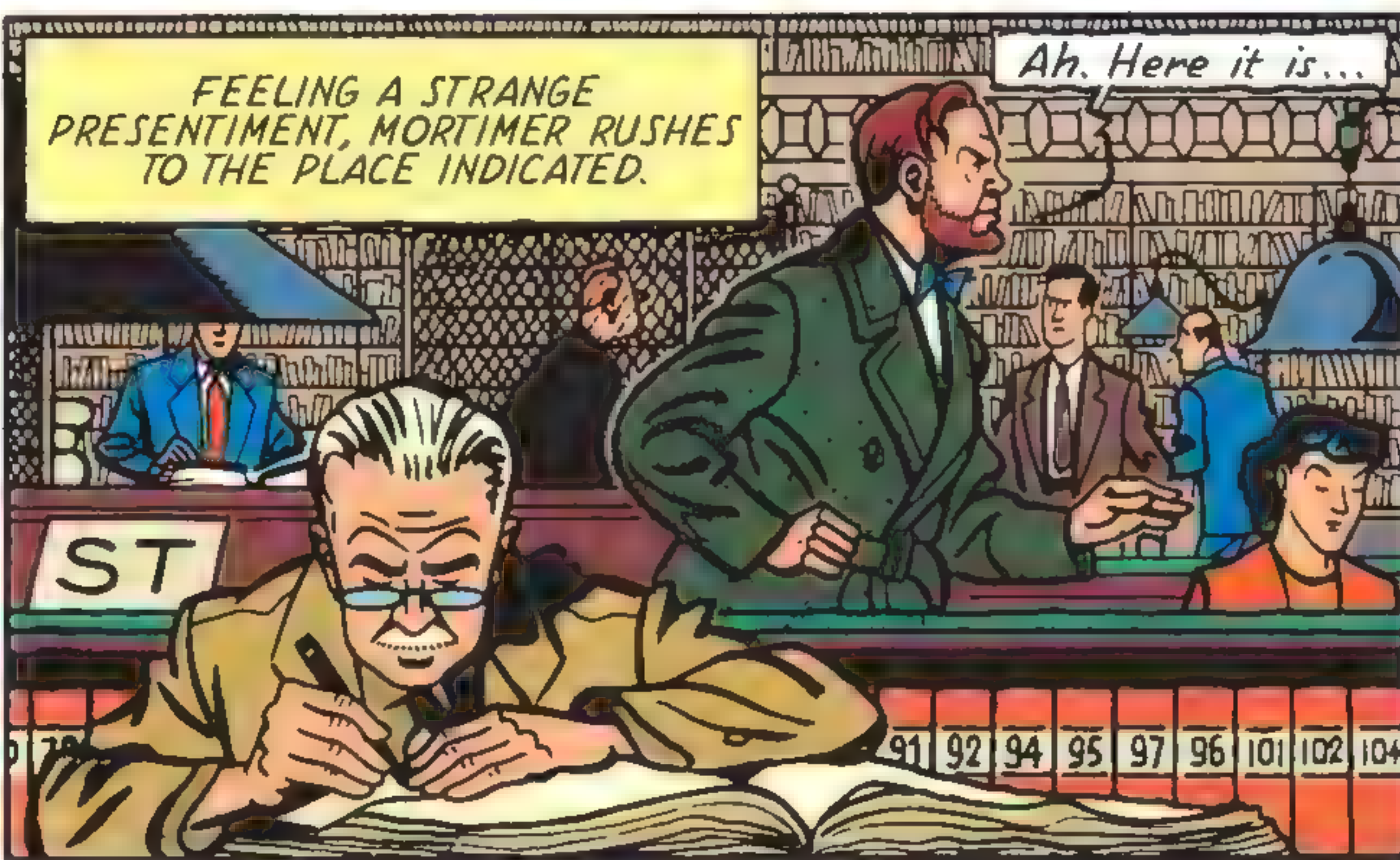
is frankly indefensible because, filled as it is with vague and ridiculous theories, only one person wrote in defence, a Dr. Jonathan Septimus. One must admit that this required some courage. However, James Thornley, no doubt anxious about his reputation for originality, instituted a libel action against Vernay and Macomber. The author of The "Mega Wave" insisted

on remaining anonymous. The case was tried yesterday by Judge Calvin and the verdict given in favour of the defendants. When judgement was pronounced, we regret that James Thornley collapsed and died. As can be imagined, the outcome of this sad story caused the greatest consternation among editors, authors and journalists.



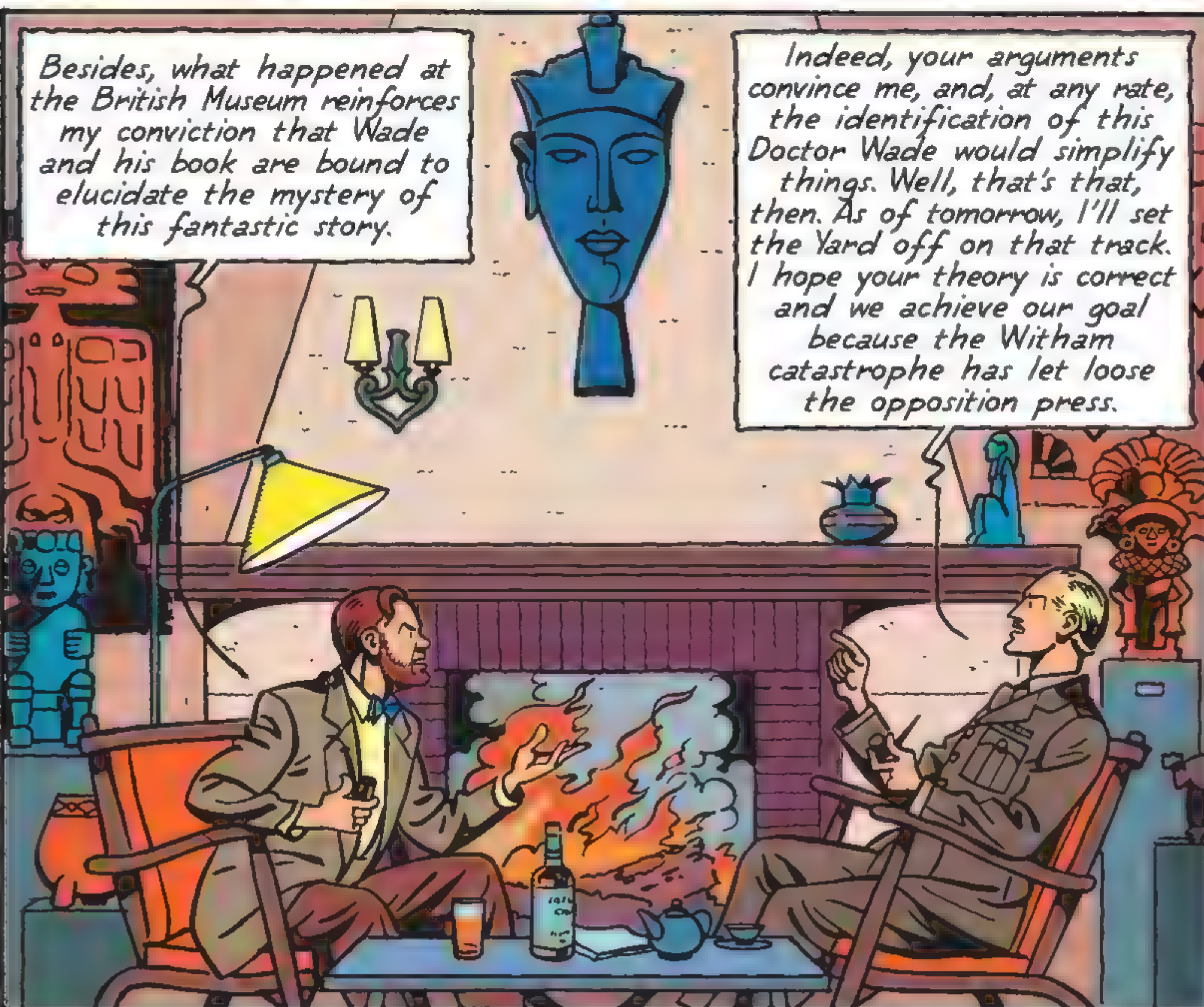
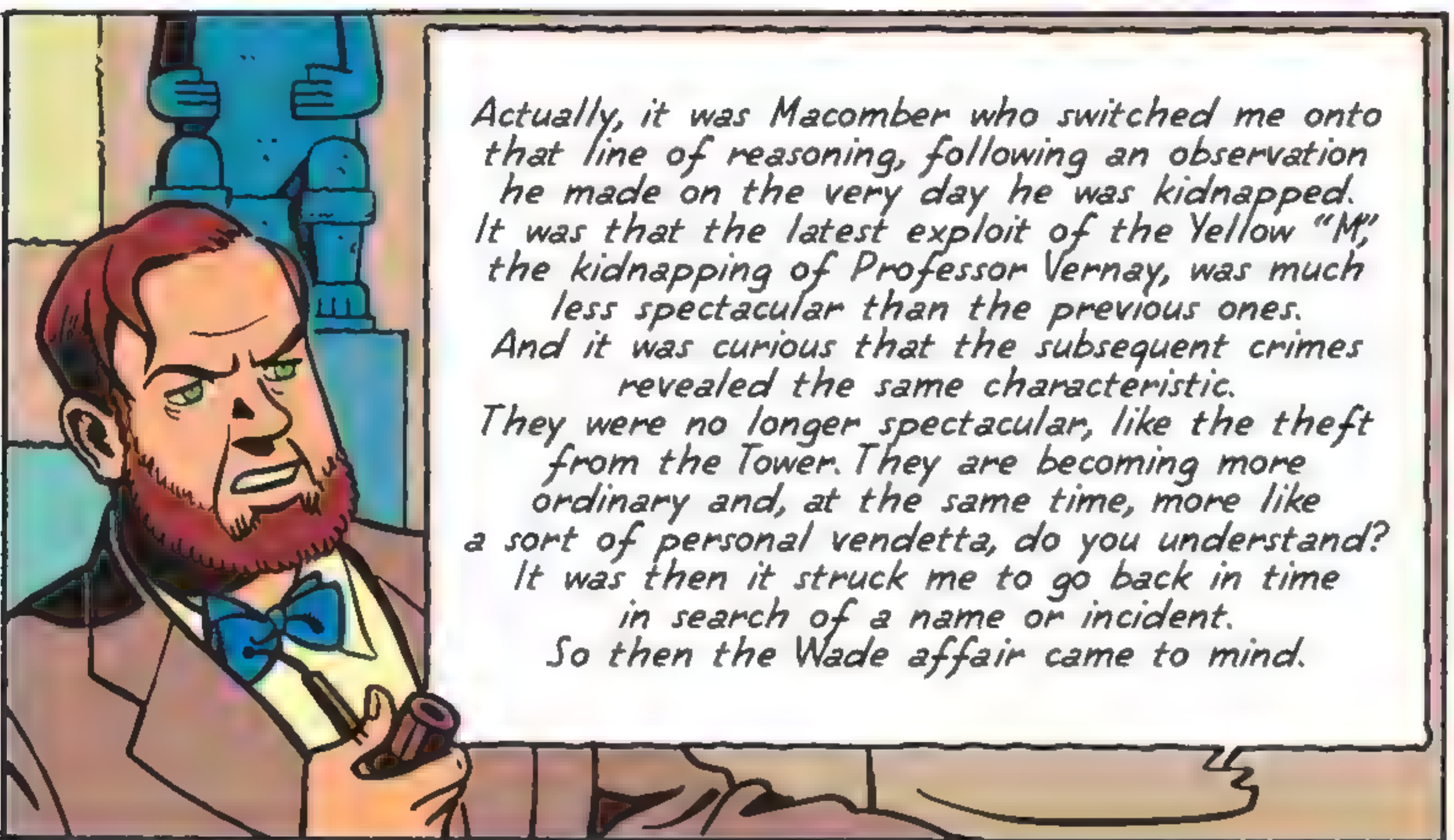


BUT HARDLY HAS HE GLANCED AT THE SLIP WHEN—





AND SO MORTIMER ACQUAINTS BLAKE WITH THE AFTERNOON'S EVENTS, REVEALING IN DETAIL THE MOTIVES THAT PROMPTED HIM TO CARRY OUT HIS RESEARCH IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE DAILY MAIL.



THREE O'CLOCK HAS JUST CHIMED IN THE SLEEPING PARK LANE. SUDDENLY A FURTIVE SILHOUETTE APPEARS AGAINST THE SKY ON THE ROOF OF NUMBER 99A.



WITH EXTRAORDINARY AGILITY, THE FIGURE SLIDES DOWN THE DRAIN PIPE AND...



AFTER GAINING A FOOTHOLD ON THE LEDGE ALONG THE REAR WALL OF THE HOUSE, HE MAKES FOR A WINDOW ON THE SECOND FLOOR.



OPENING THE WINDOW WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST SOUND, THIS UNUSUAL PERSON SLIPS INSIDE.



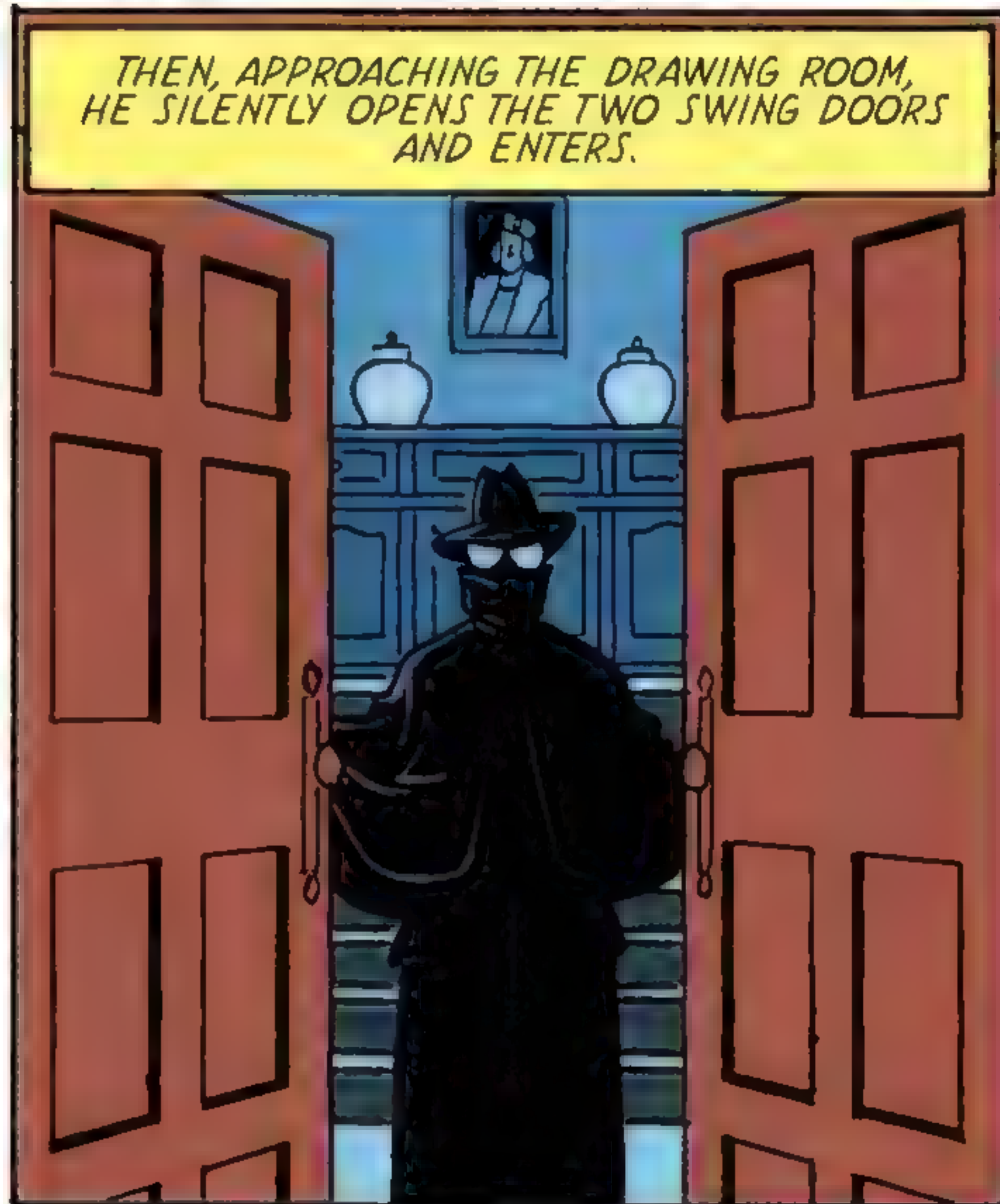
AFTER A MOMENT'S HESITATION, AND AS IF OBEYING A SUDDEN IMPULSE, HE WALKS THE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR...



... GOES DOWN THE STAIRWAY SERVING THE OFFICES AND ARRIVES IN THE HALL.



THEN, APPROACHING THE DRAWING ROOM, HE SILENTLY OPENS THE TWO SWING DOORS AND ENTERS.



BUT THE UNUSUAL DECOR OF THE PLACE WHERE BLAKE AND MORTIMER HAVE GATHERED THEIR EXPEDITION SOUVENIRS SEEMS TO TROUBLE THE DISQUIETING VISITOR...

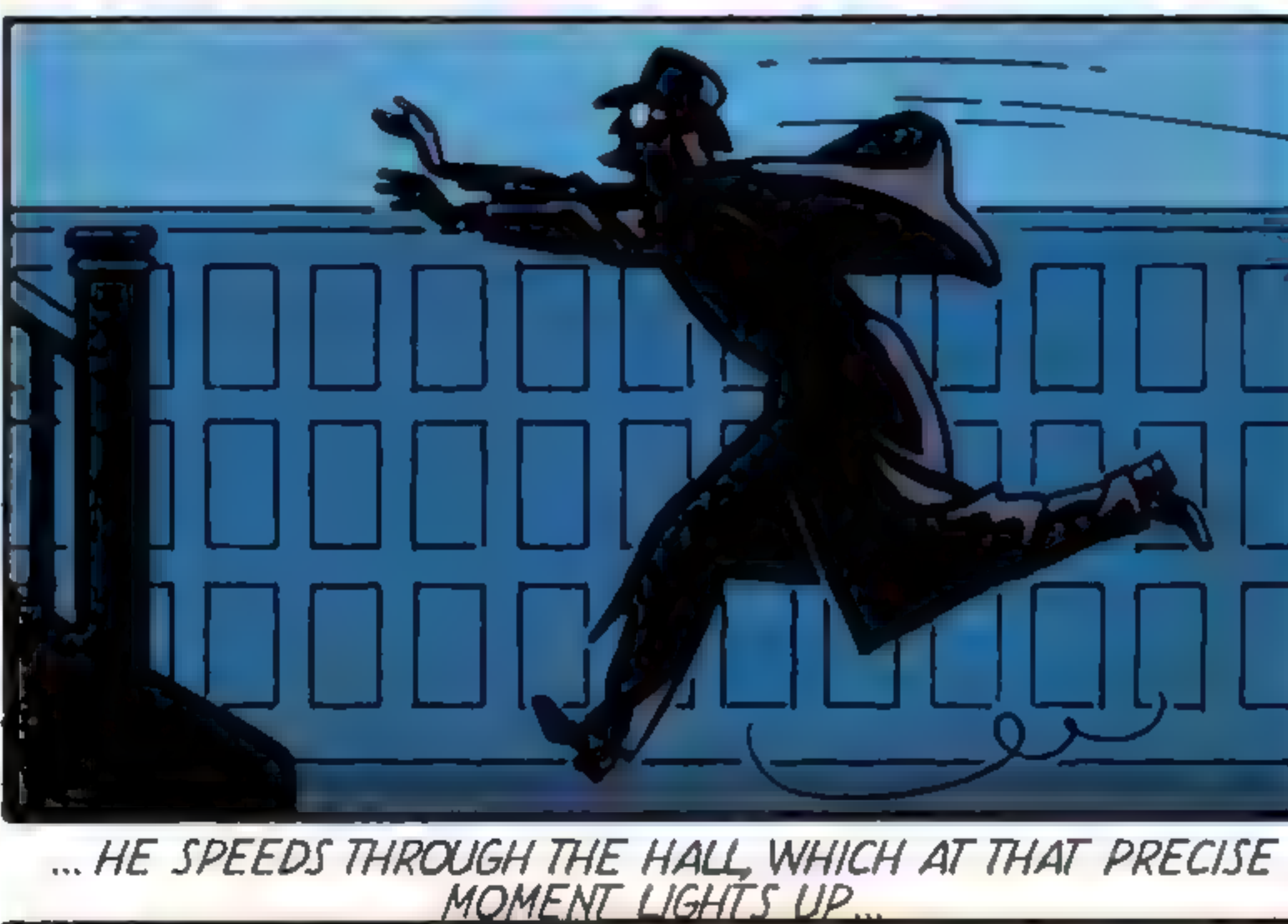
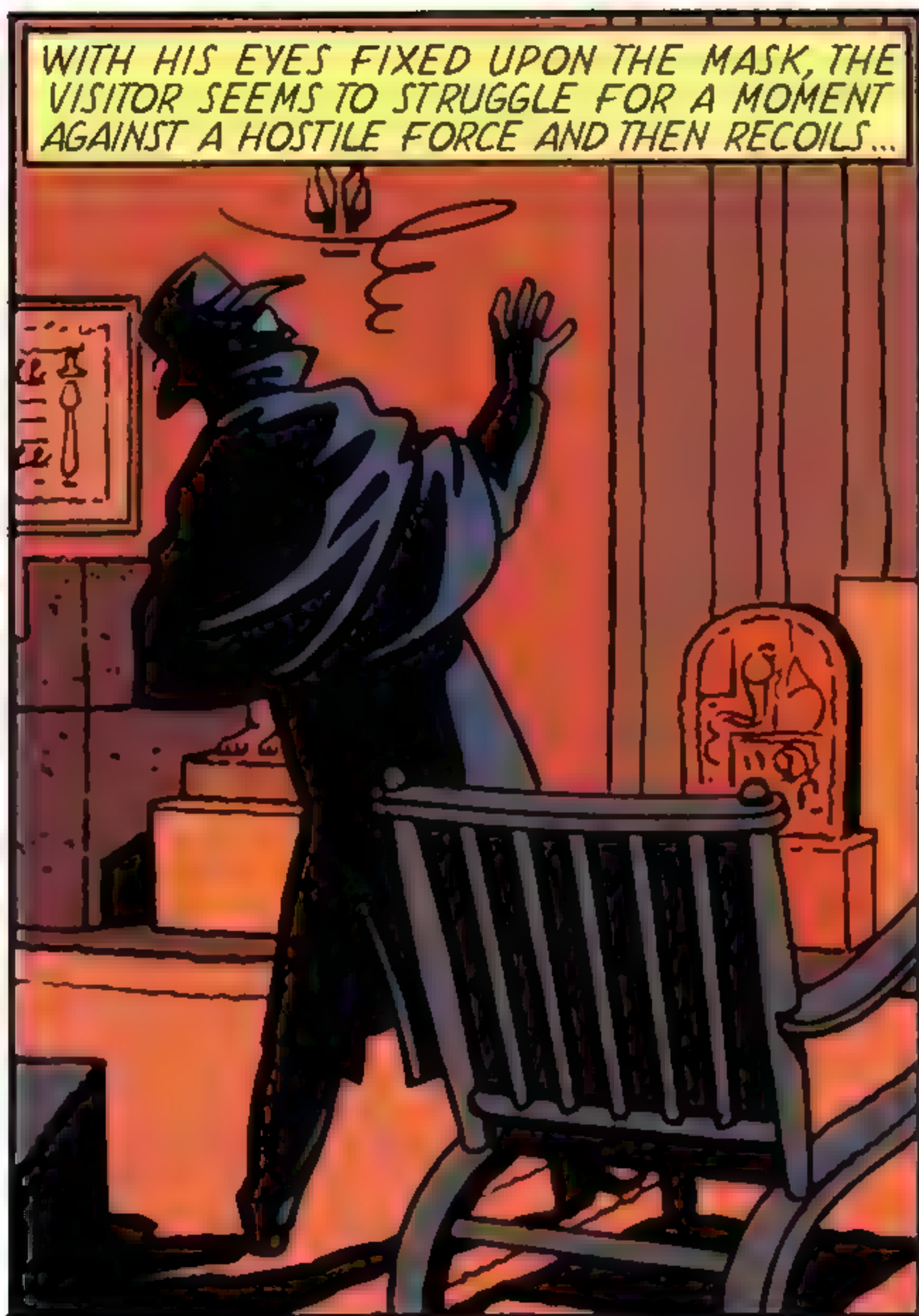


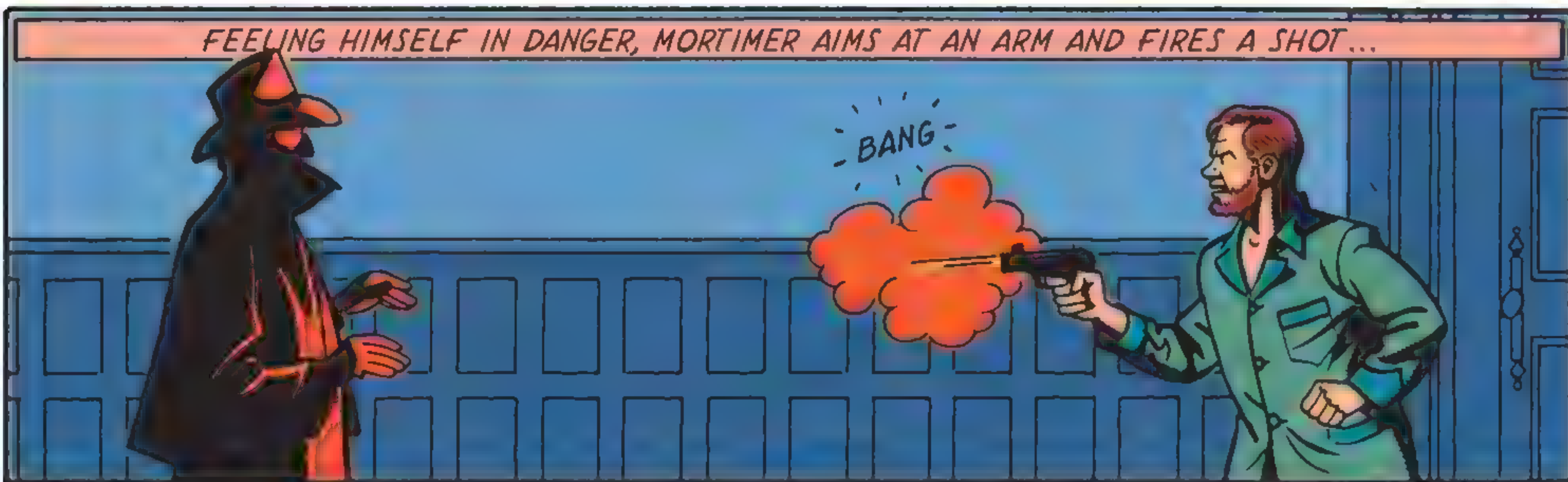
... WHO SUDDENLY STOPS SHORT BEFORE THE GREAT PHARAOH'S MASK ABOVE THE FIREPLACE...

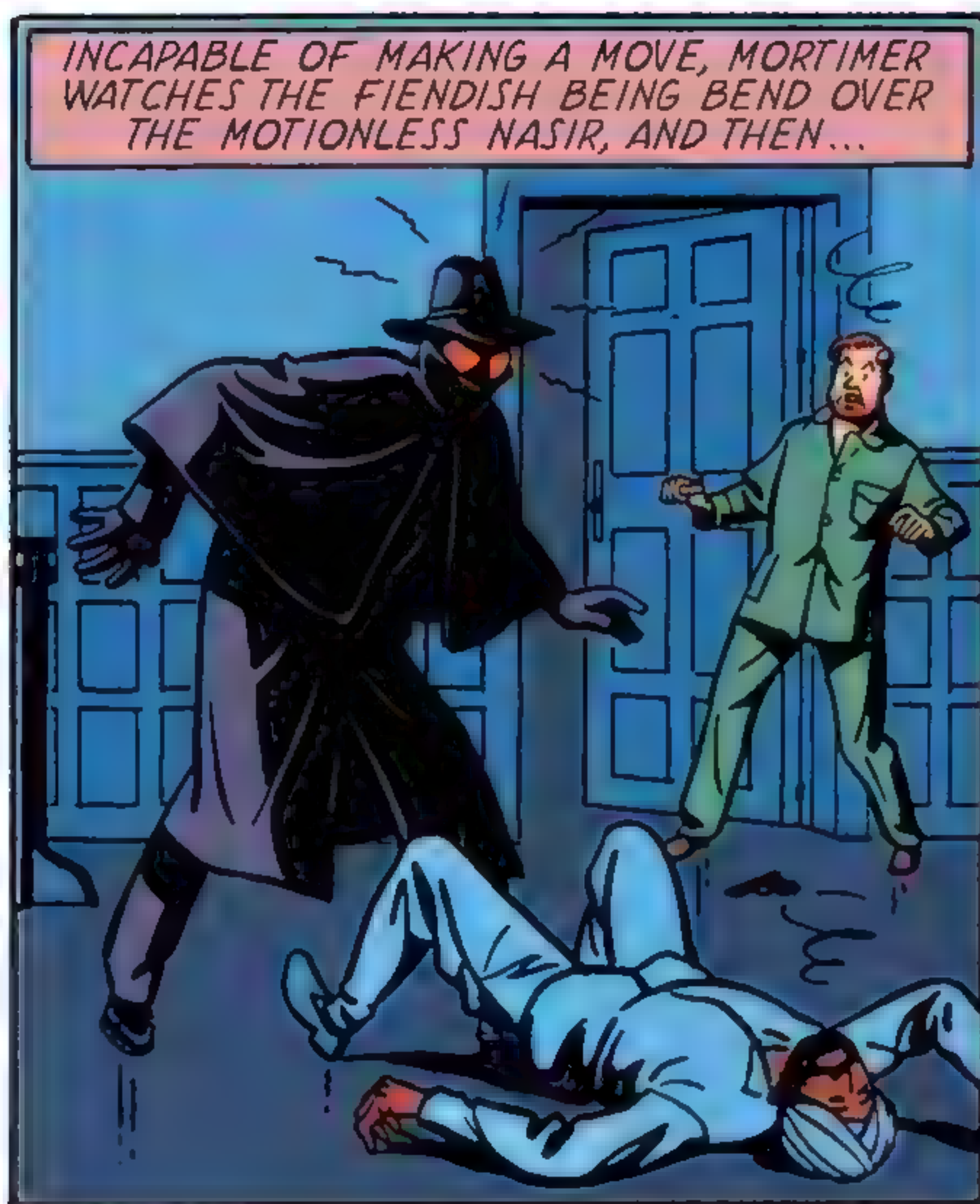


... AND SEES THE ENIGMATIC FACE OF THE EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGN SUDDENLY APPEAR TO COME BACK TO LIFE IN THE DYING GLOW OF THE WOOD FIRE.









BLAKE AND MORTIMER (WHOSE STRANGE INDISPOSITION HAS DISAPPEARED) HAVE REALISED THAT PURSUIT IS USELESS. AS THE FUSES IN THE HALL HAVE BLOWN FOR AN UNKNOWN REASON, THE CURRENT HAS TO BE RECONNECTED. THEN, WHILE MORTIMER DEALS WITH NASIR, BLAKE UNDERTAKES SOME RAPID INVESTIGATION PENDING THE ARRIVAL OF KENDALL.

Park Lane is in an uproar. Never within living memory has such gunfire been heard. I've informed the police briefly of the situation, and they have undertaken to do what is necessary.



And how is our brave companion?

There is no need to worry. He's in exactly the same condition as previous victims. But have you found anything?



These. Your flattened bullets scattered about the hall as if they had rebounded off an armour plate, which is somewhat curious, because if you had missed your mark, the bullets would have lodged in the wall facing you...

Indeed. That's extraordinary.



Say, what if I asked Kendall to bring along the ballistics expert from the Yard?

Good idea, but do it quickly. In the meantime, I'll go and dress.



All right. Provided he's not already on his way...



BUT AS THE PROFESSOR GOES QUICKLY TOWARDS THE TELEPHONE, HE STUMBLES AGAINST AN UNEXPECTED OBSTACLE AND FALLS HEAVILY...



Well, what happened? Nothing broken, I hope?...

Hmm. No. I simply caught my foot in this blasted thing. What do you think of that...?



What? An electric wire in a place like that?... That's odd!...

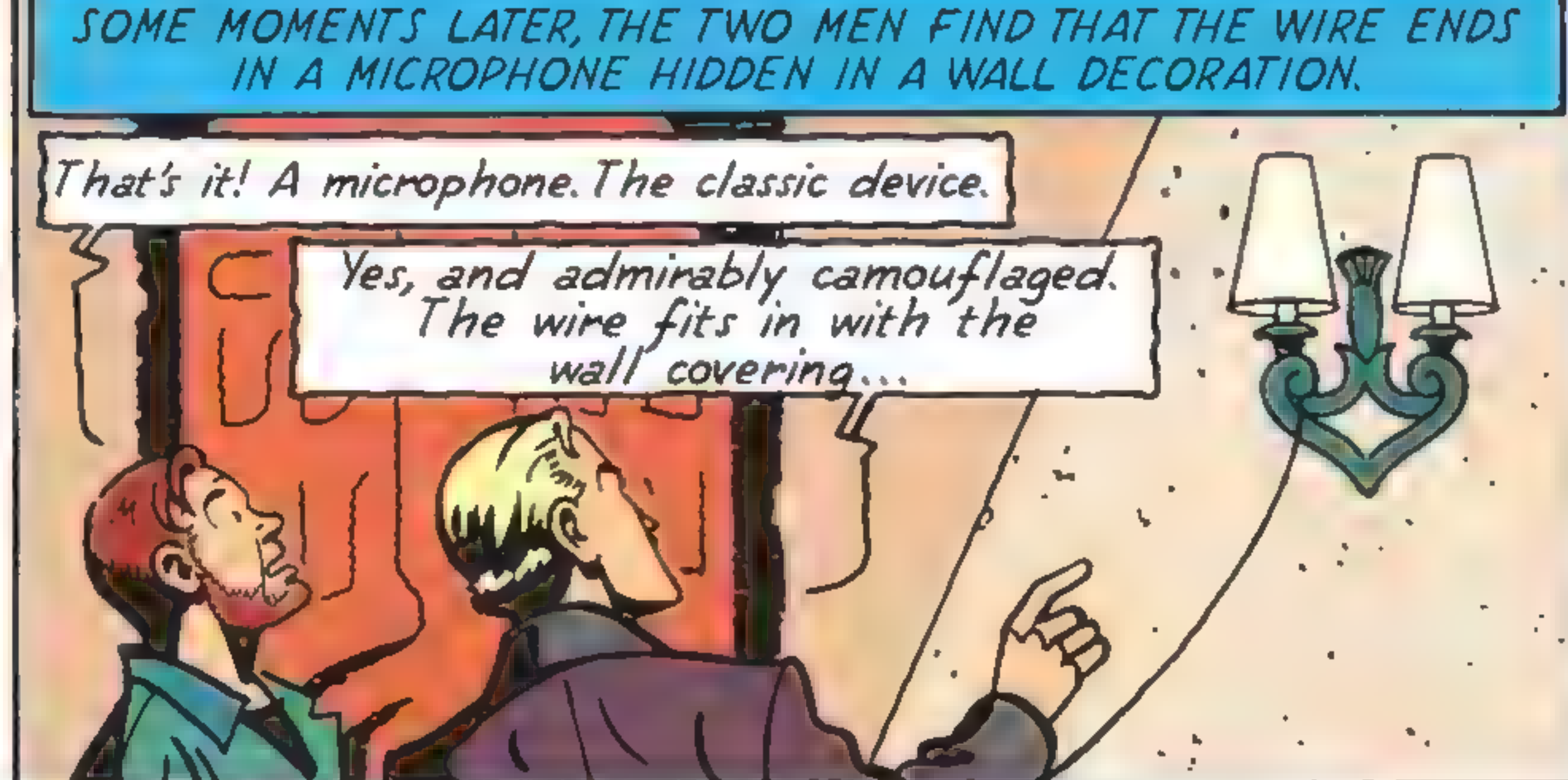
That's what I think, too. Let us see, then, where it leads us...



SOME MOMENTS LATER, THE TWO MEN FIND THAT THE WIRE ENDS IN A MICROPHONE HIDDEN IN A WALL DECORATION.

That's it! A microphone. The classic device.

Yes, and admirably camouflaged. The wire fits in with the wall covering...



It won't be difficult to follow...

It runs along the shelf, down here, and -



BUT ABRUPTLY BLAKE UTTERS AN EXCLAMATION.

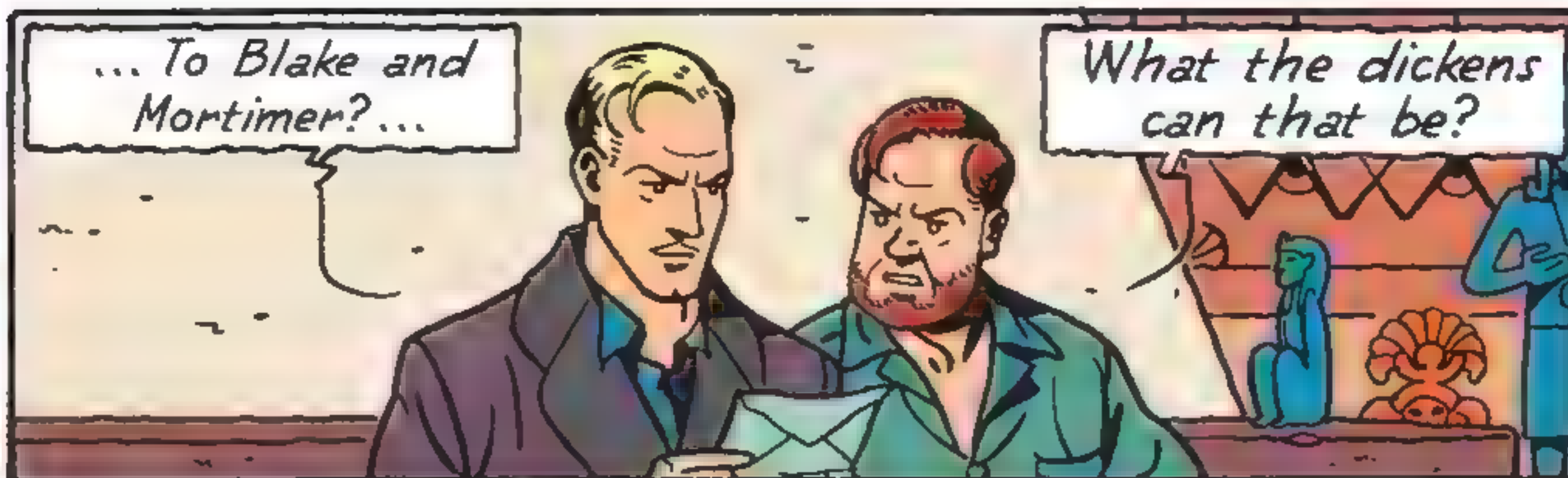
Just look now!

What then?





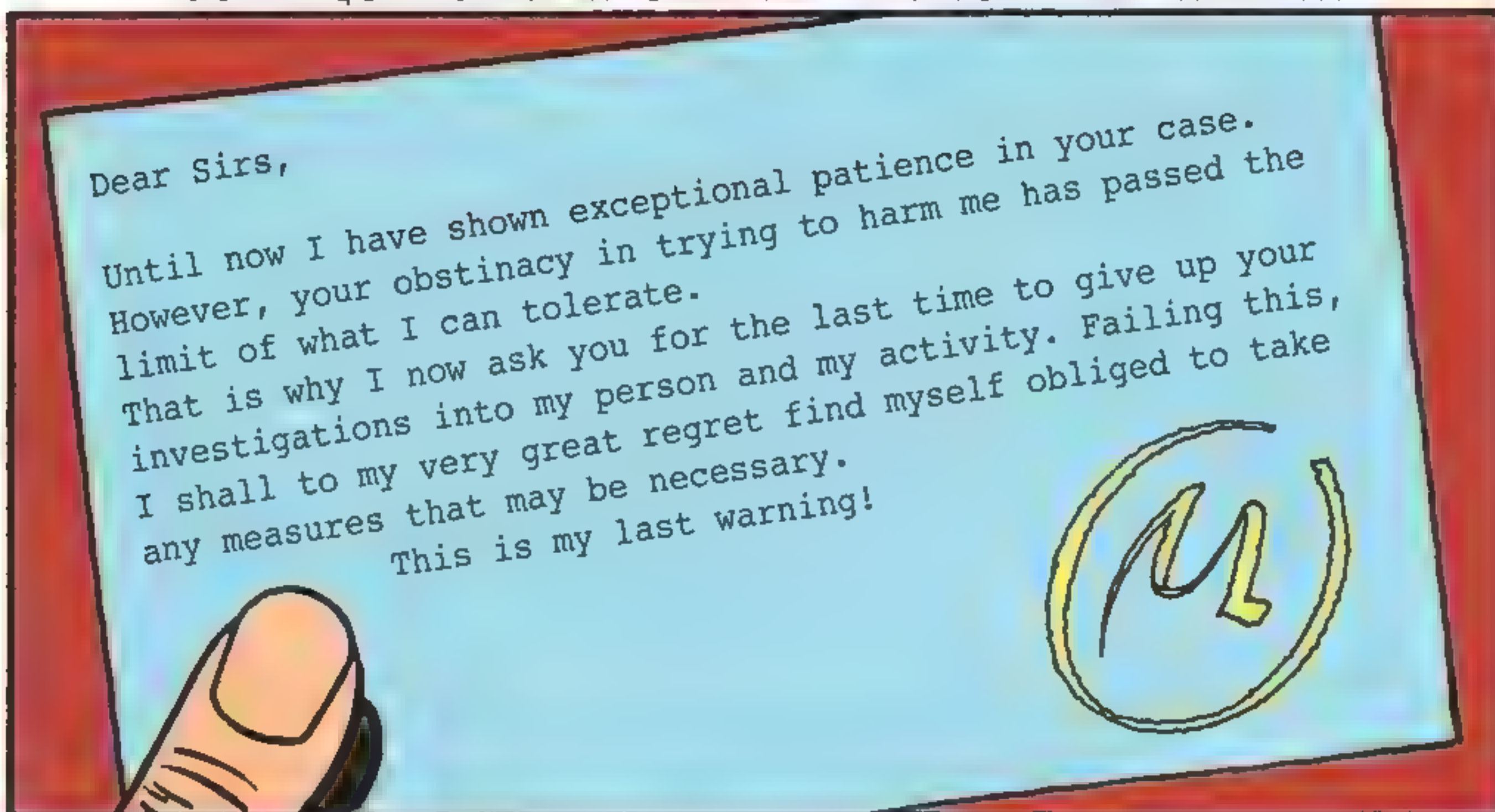
IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE, UNDER AN ARMCHAIR, LIES A CREASED ENVELOPE.



... To Blake and Mortimer? ...

What the dickens can that be?

BLAKE QUICKLY TEARS OPEN THE ENVELOPE AND READS...



Dear Sirs,

Until now I have shown exceptional patience in your case. However, your obstinacy in trying to harm me has passed the limit of what I can tolerate. That is why I now ask you for the last time to give up your investigations into my person and my activity. Failing this, I shall to my very great regret find myself obliged to take any measures that may be necessary. This is my last warning!

(M)



So that's the reason for this visit: to actually leave this ultimatum here. What nerve!

Yes. To take such a risk, he either has to be mad or incredibly sure of himself.



RRRING



Ah, there's Inspector Kendall. He'll have his hands full for quite some time. Let's take advantage of that to make ourselves presentable.

Let's leave him to it. As for me, I've had my fill of excitement for one night.

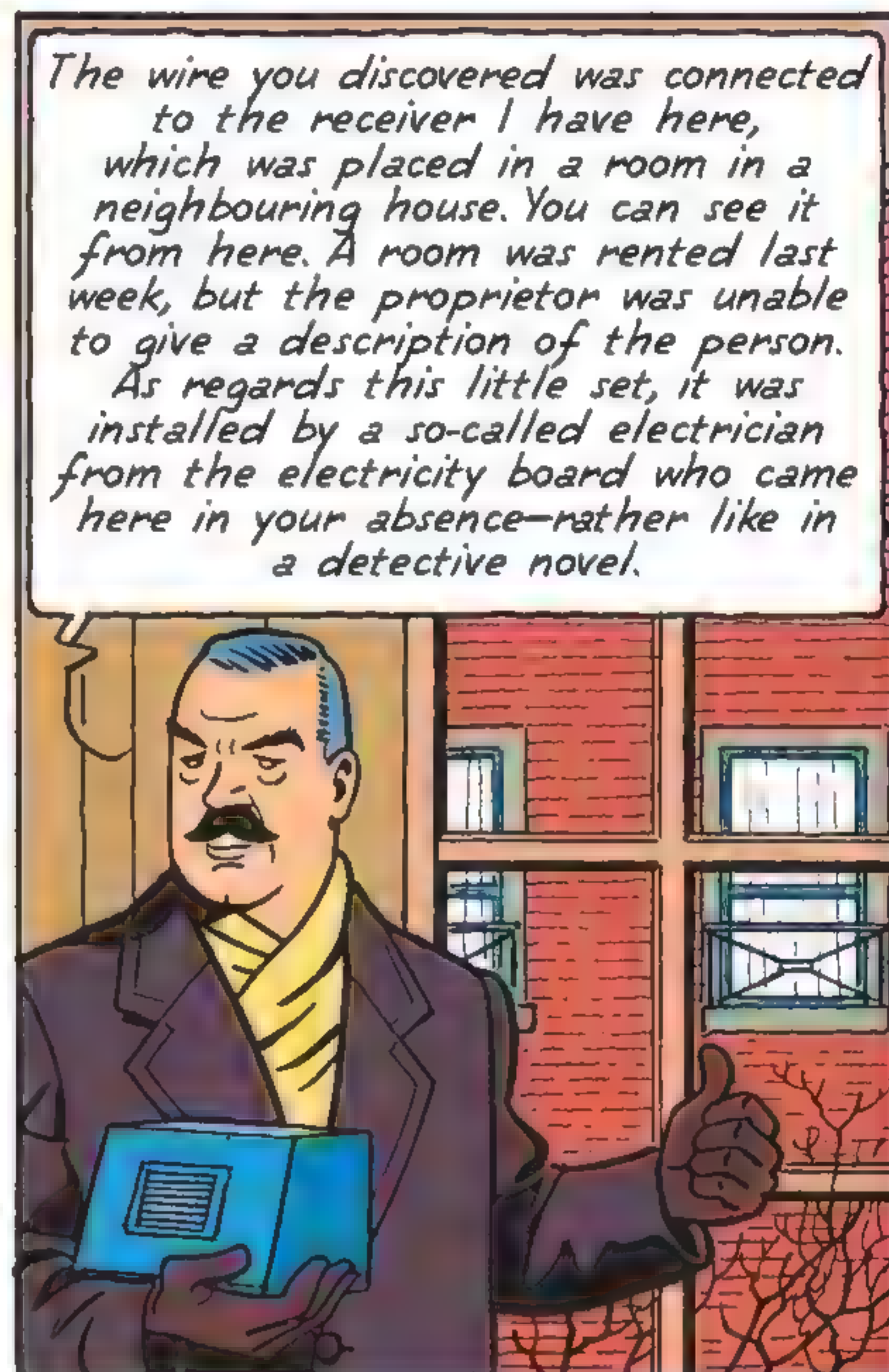
NASIR HAS BEEN MOVED TO CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL. INSPECTOR KENDALL AND THE EXPERTS FROM SCOTLAND YARD HAVE BEEN BUSY IN THE PARK LANE RESIDENCE, PICKING UP THE TRAIL OF THE STRANGE VISITOR AND EXAMINING THE SLIGHTEST CLUES. THEN THEY PURSUE THEIR ENQUIRIES OUTSIDE. FINALLY, KENDALL RETURNS TO OUR FRIENDS' HOUSE WITH A TRIUMPHANT AIR.



Hello, Inspector?

Anything new?

Many things, gentlemen. I hope you agree that the police have been speedy.

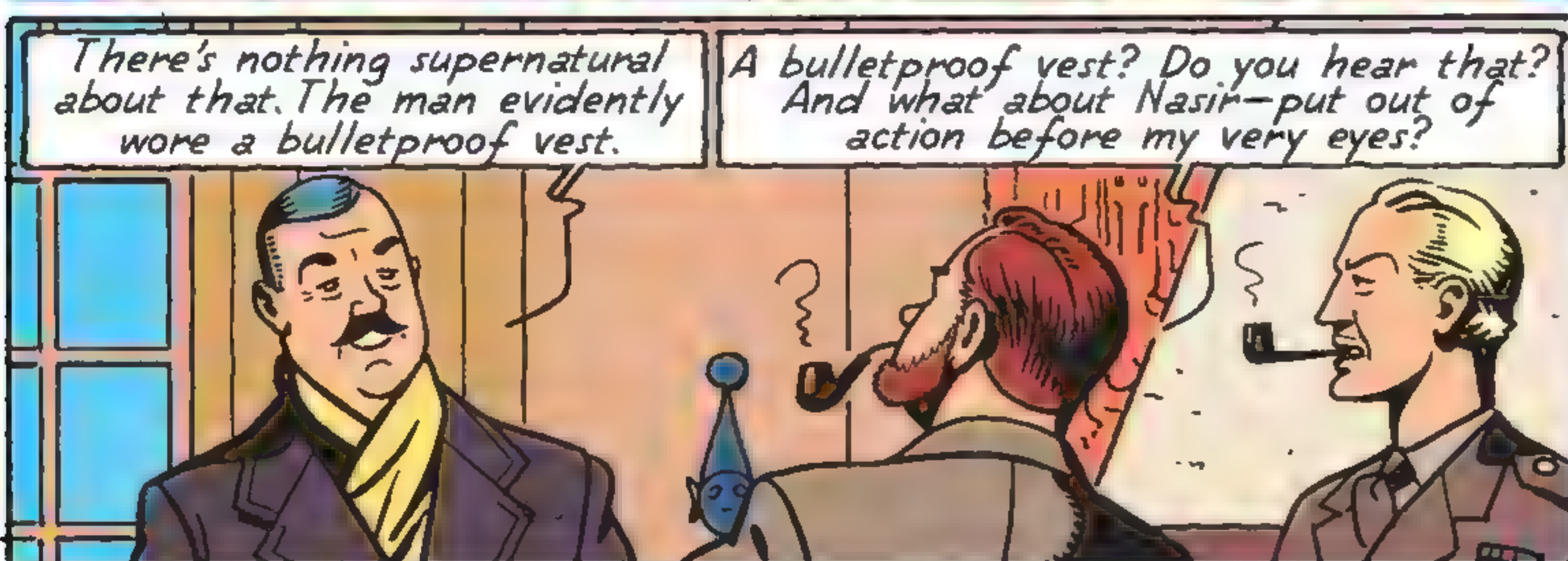


The wire you discovered was connected to the receiver I have here, which was placed in a room in a neighbouring house. You can see it from here. A room was rented last week, but the proprietor was unable to give a description of the person. As regards this little set, it was installed by a so-called electrician from the electricity board who came here in your absence—rather like in a detective novel.



As for this fellow's exploits, I suspect you were—er—embroidering a little.

Really? In that case, how do you explain his invulnerability?



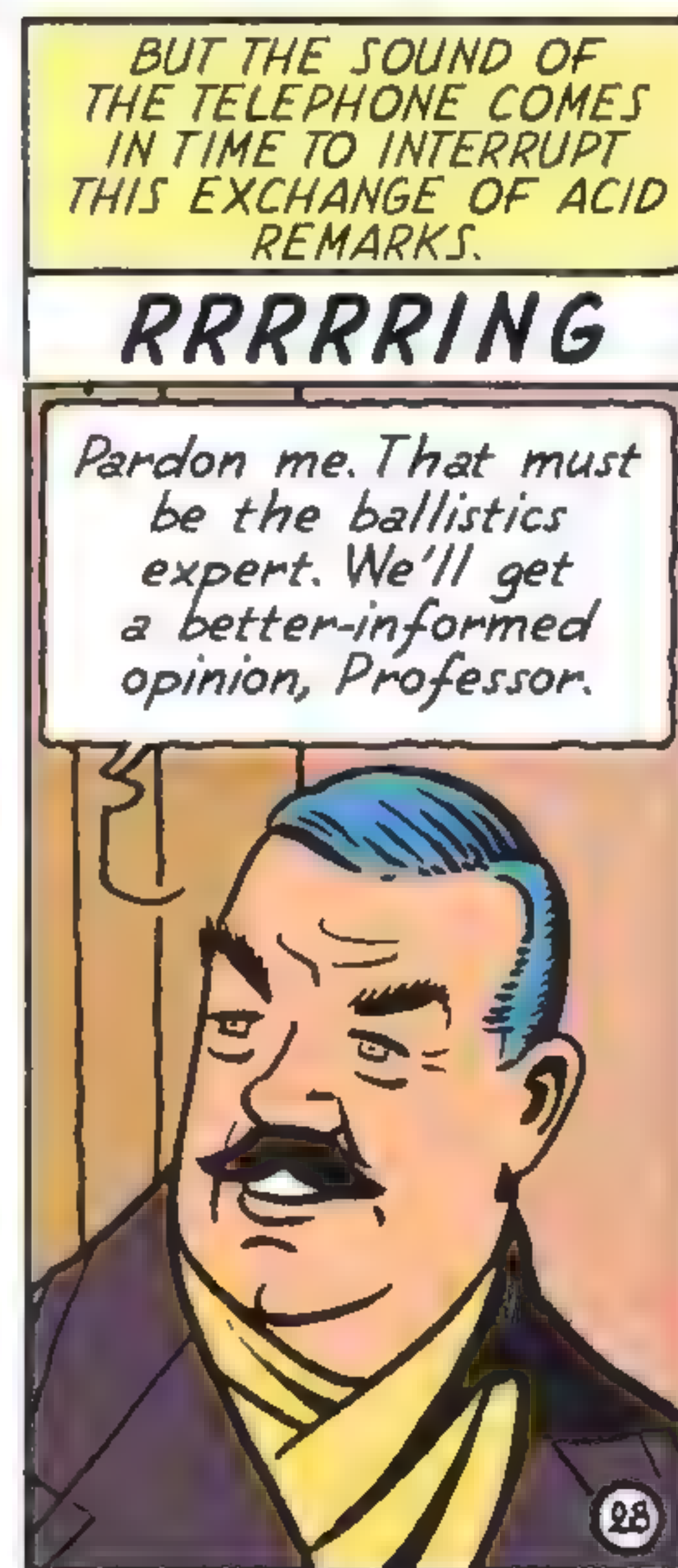
There's nothing supernatural about that. The man evidently wore a bulletproof vest.

A bulletproof vest? Do you hear that? And what about Nasir—put out of action before my very eyes?



Nonsense. He could have been thrown to the ground by a judo hold and stunned. The darkness and your fertile imagination did the rest.

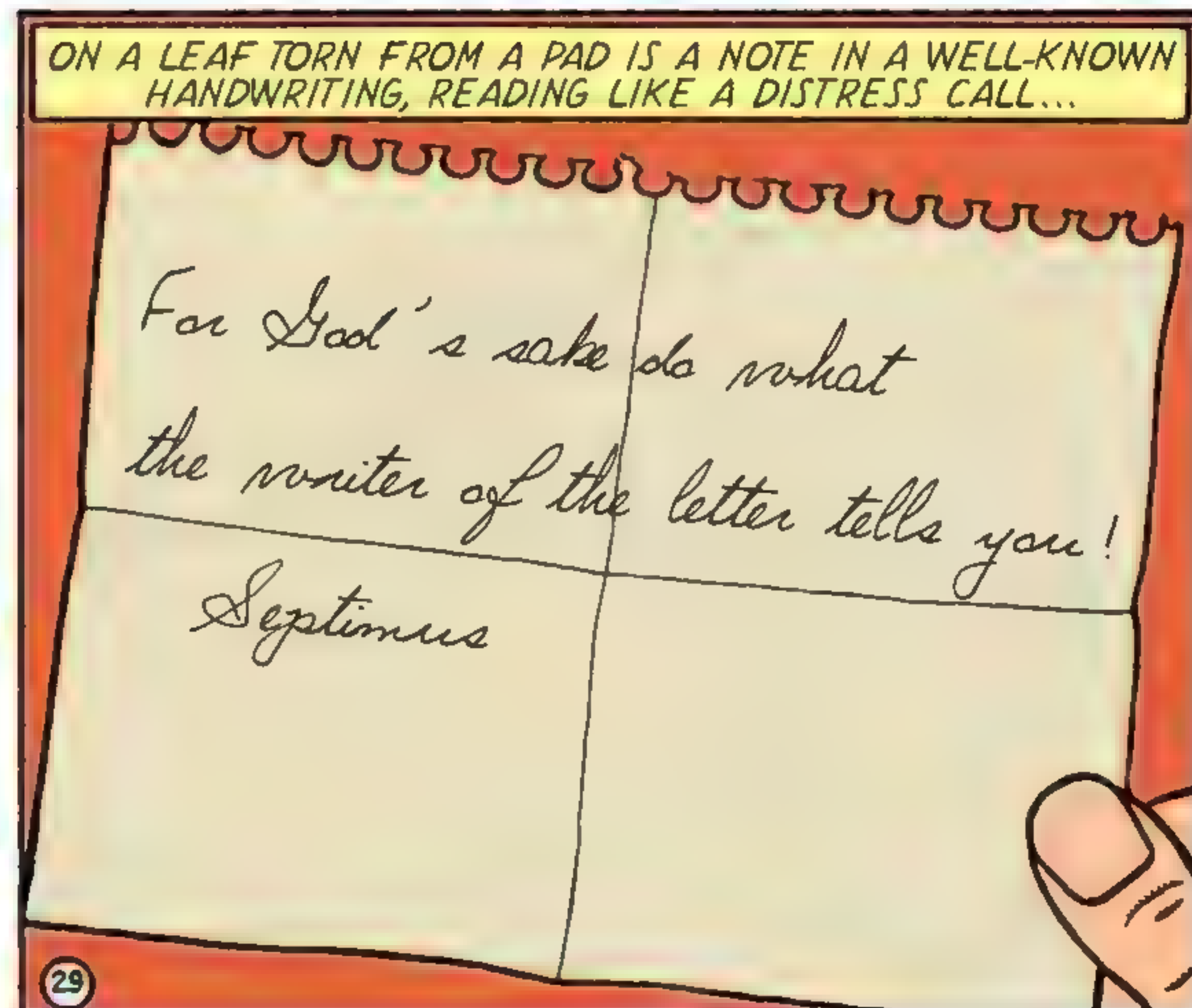
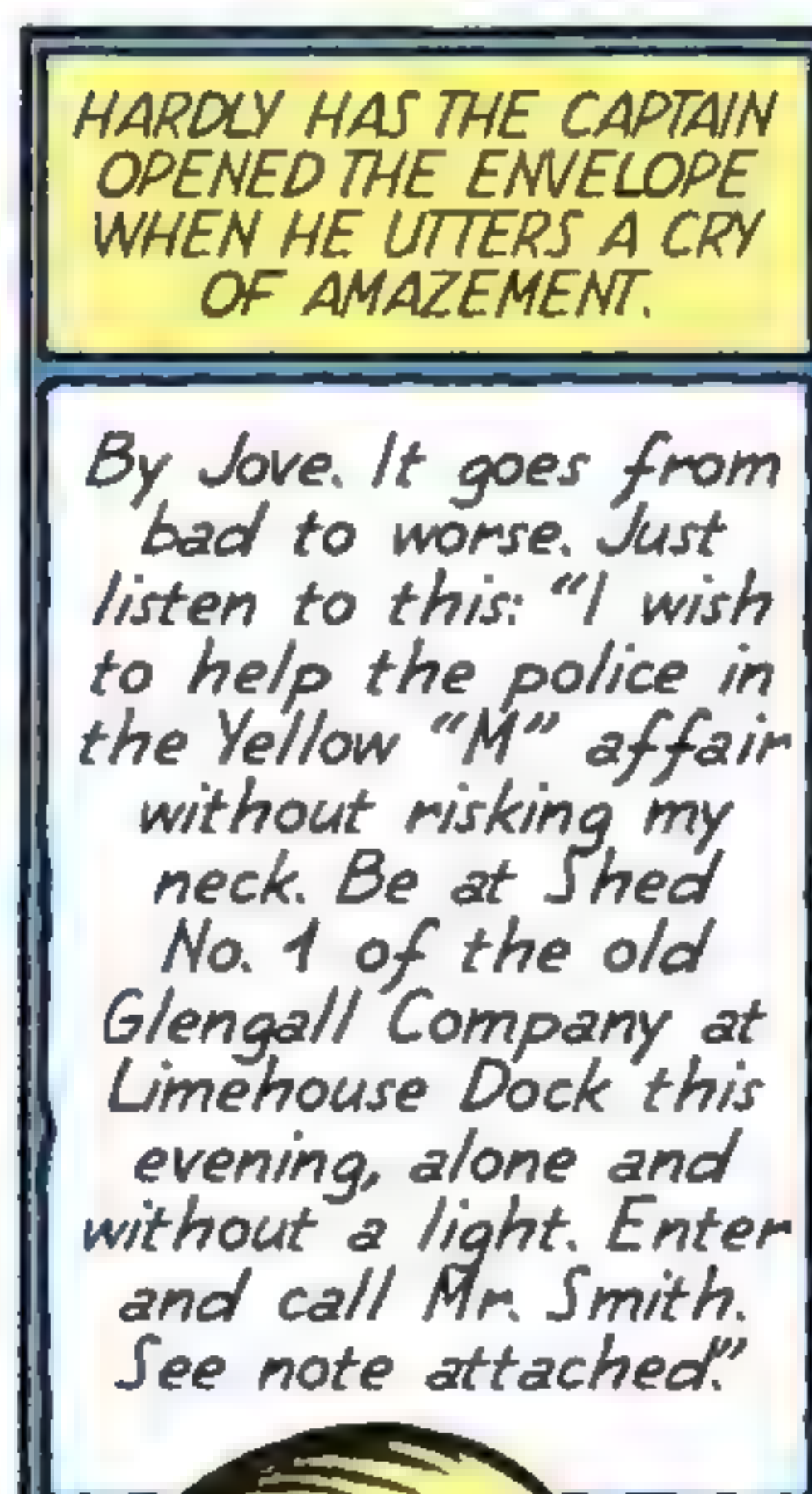
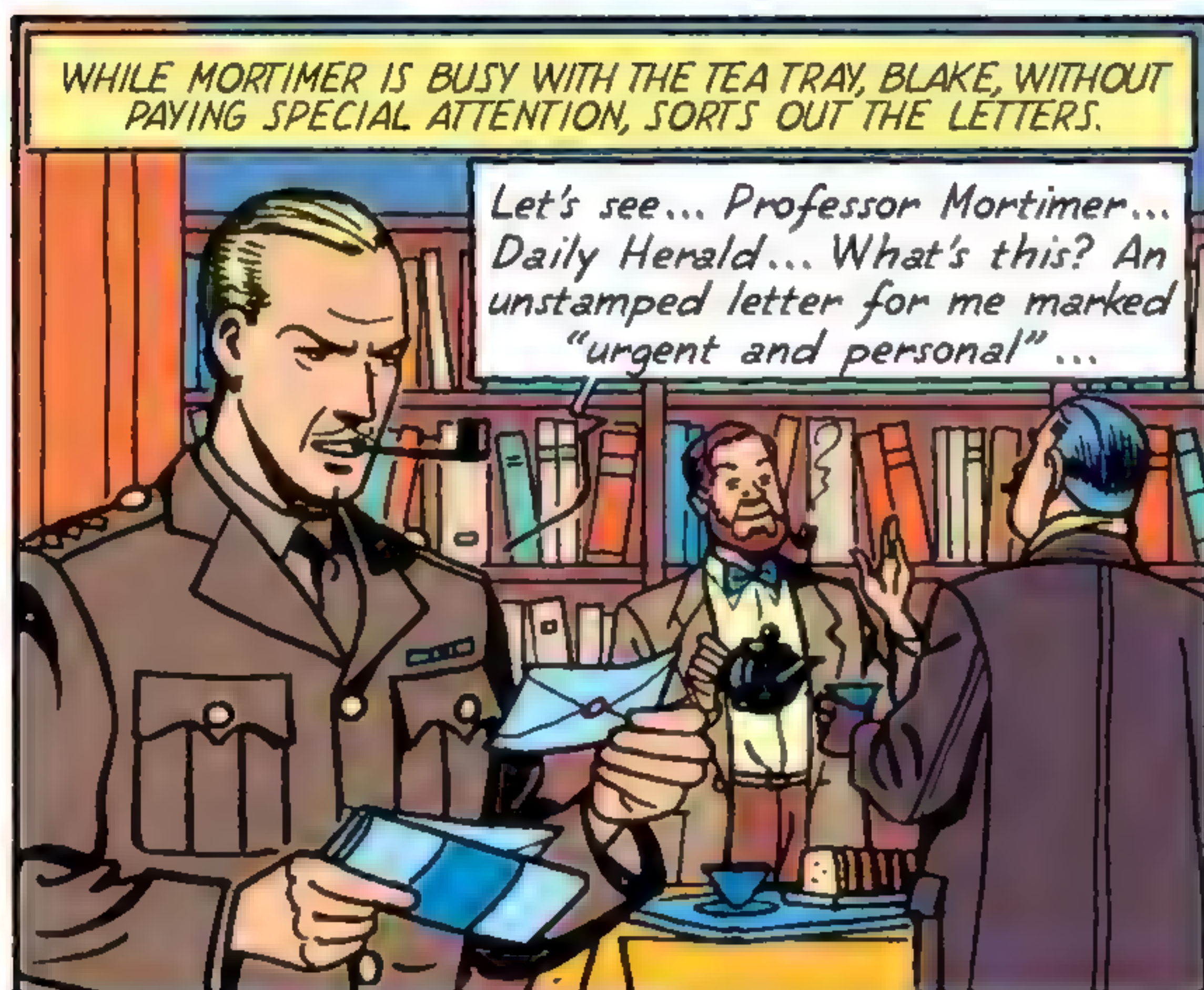
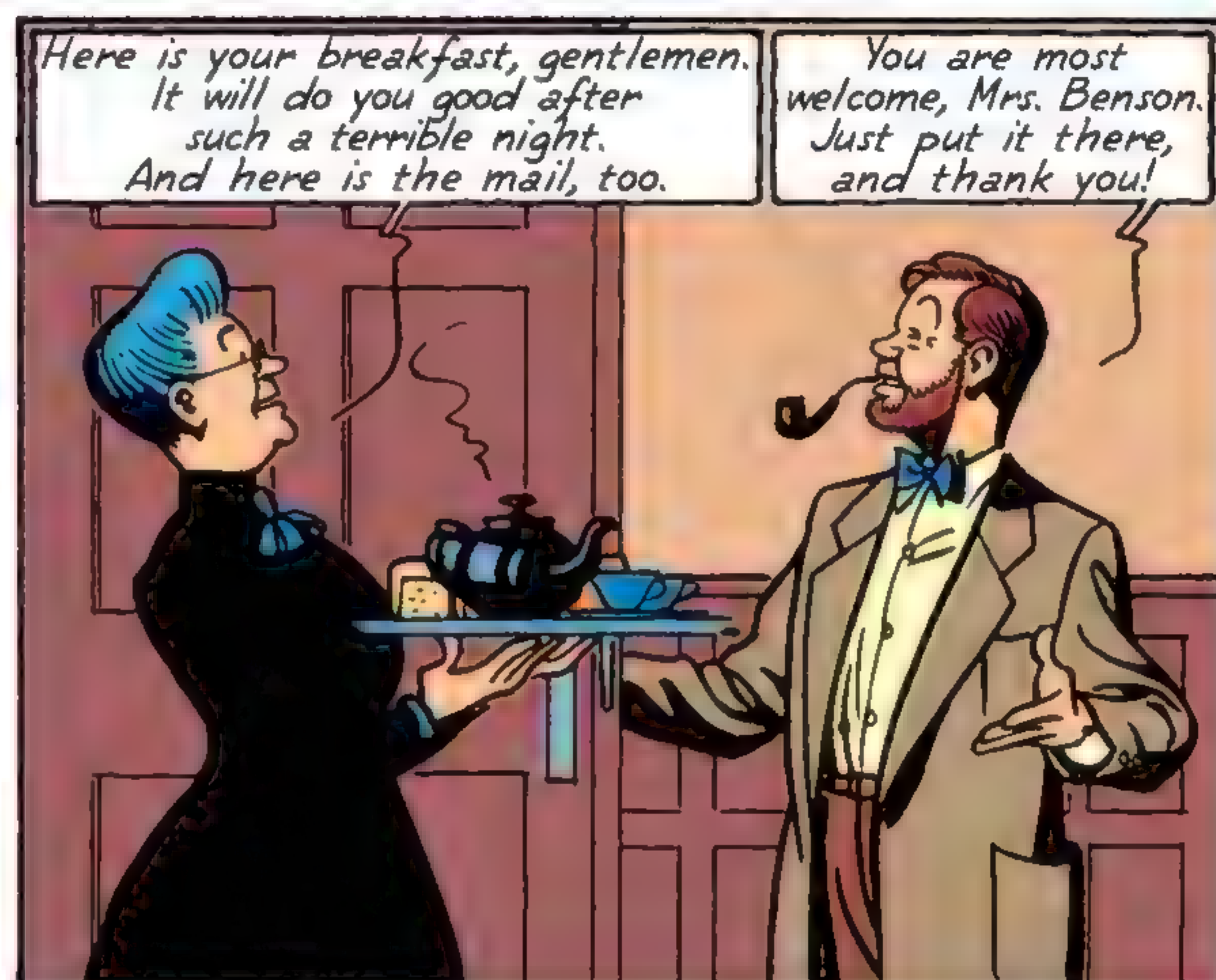
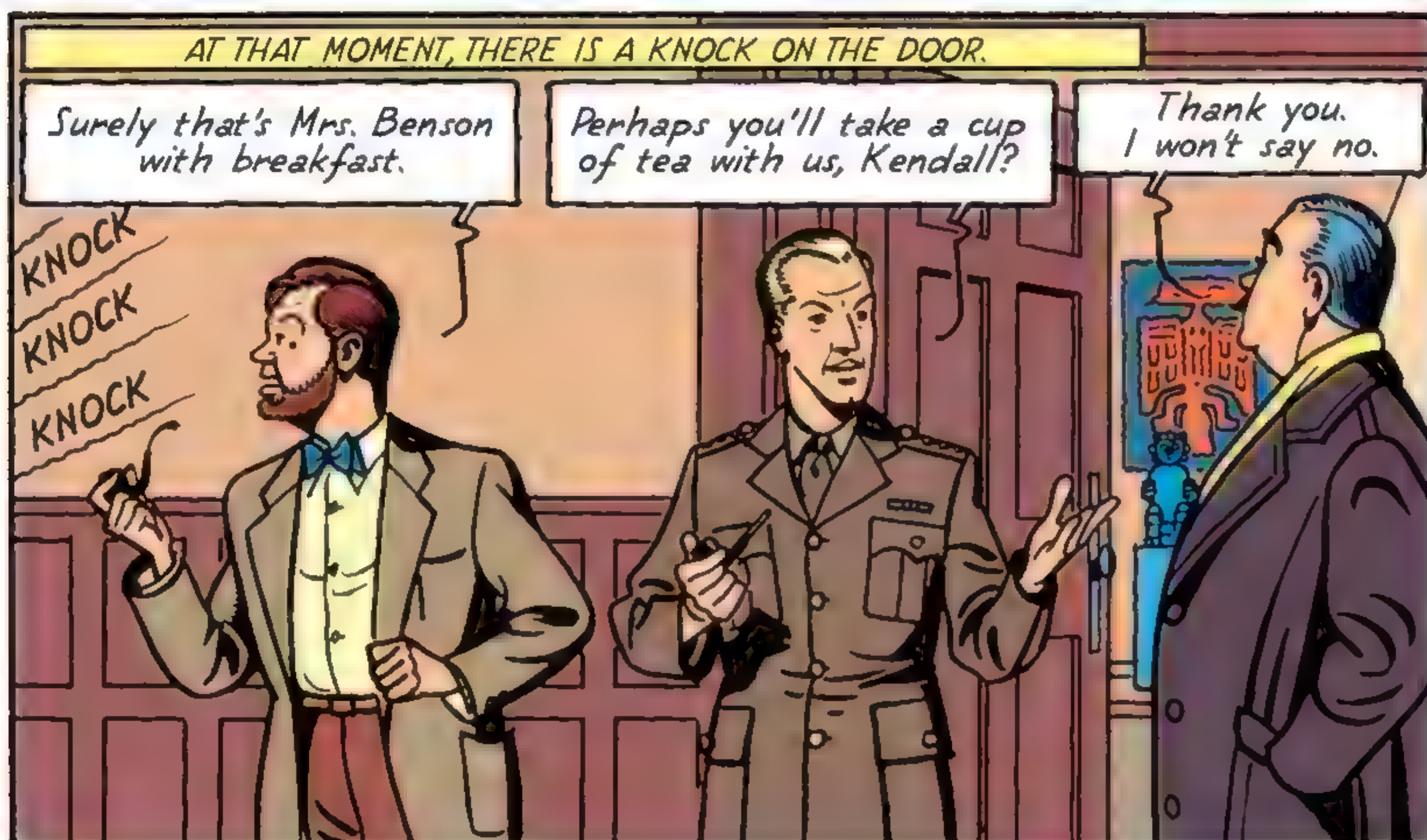
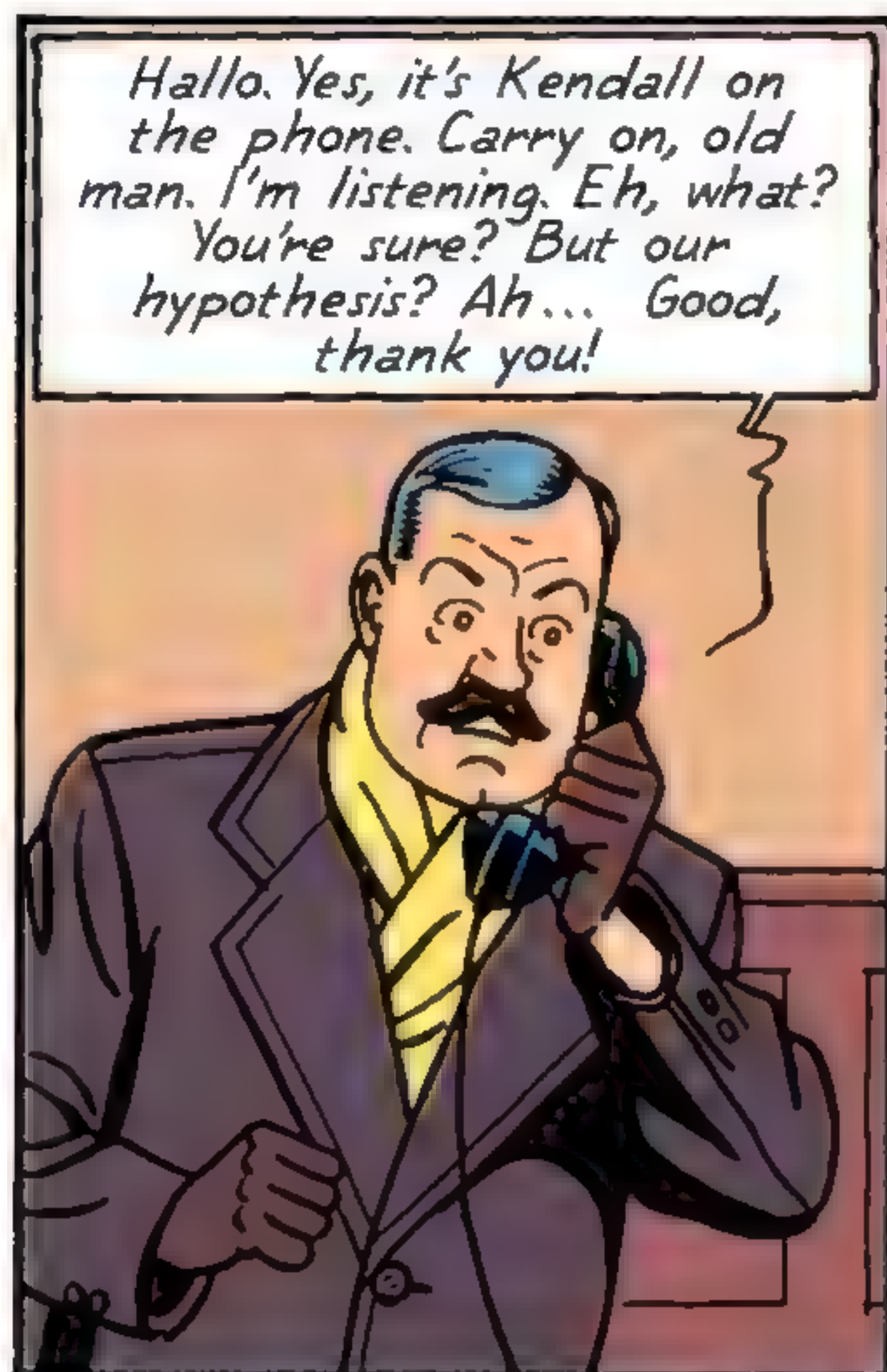
So, when you were stunned in the hall at Judge Calvin's, was that due to excessive imagination or a judo hold?



BUT THE SOUND OF THE TELEPHONE COMES IN TIME TO INTERRUPT THIS EXCHANGE OF ACID REMARKS.

RRRRRING

Pardon me. That must be the ballistics expert. We'll get a better-informed opinion, Professor.





Septimus. Well, I never...

Septimus? Are you sure that that's his handwriting?

Absolutely sure. At any rate, that's certainly his style.



What do you intend to do?

Go there, of course!

But look out, Blake. It's probably a trap!

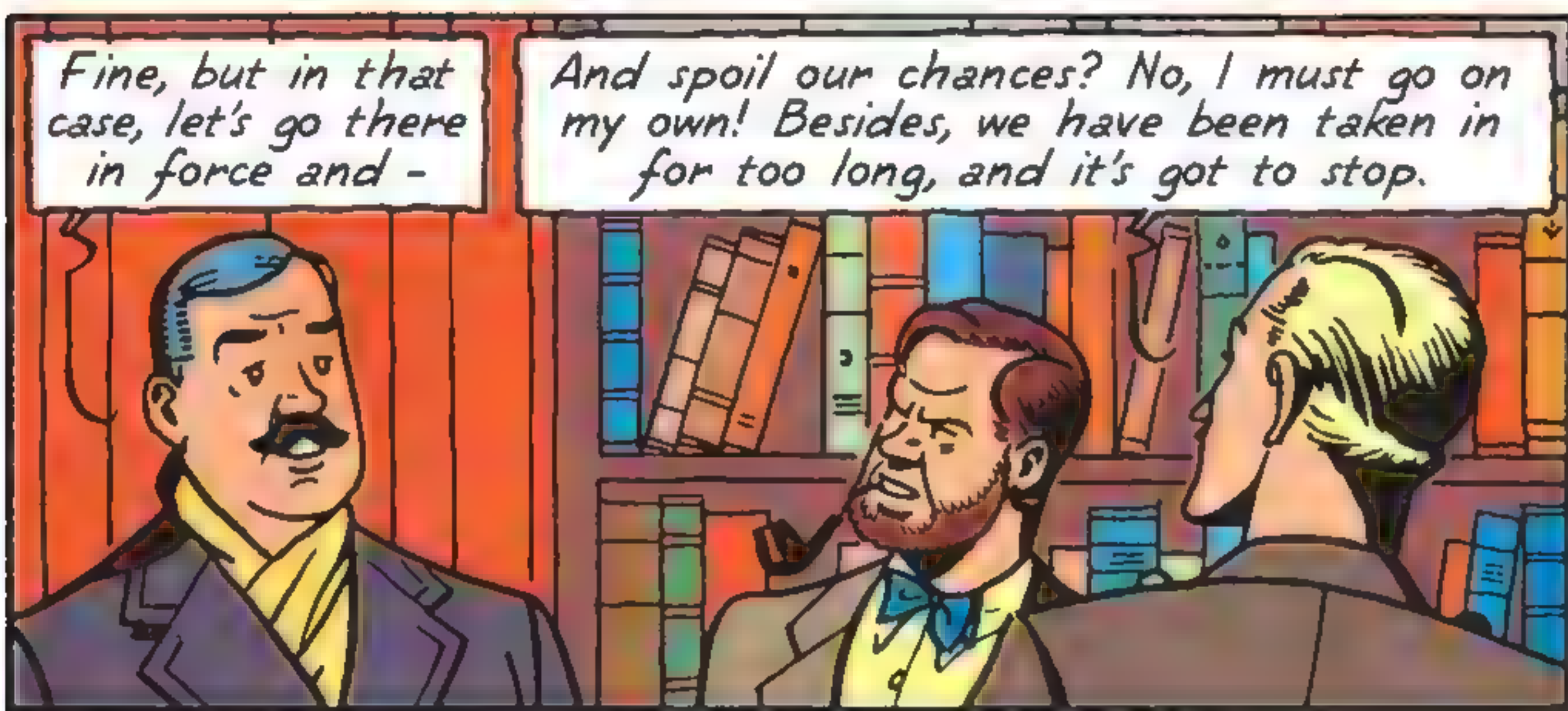
It probably is. But that's a risk to be taken.



And who's to say that this note hasn't been obtained under duress from the unfortunate doctor?

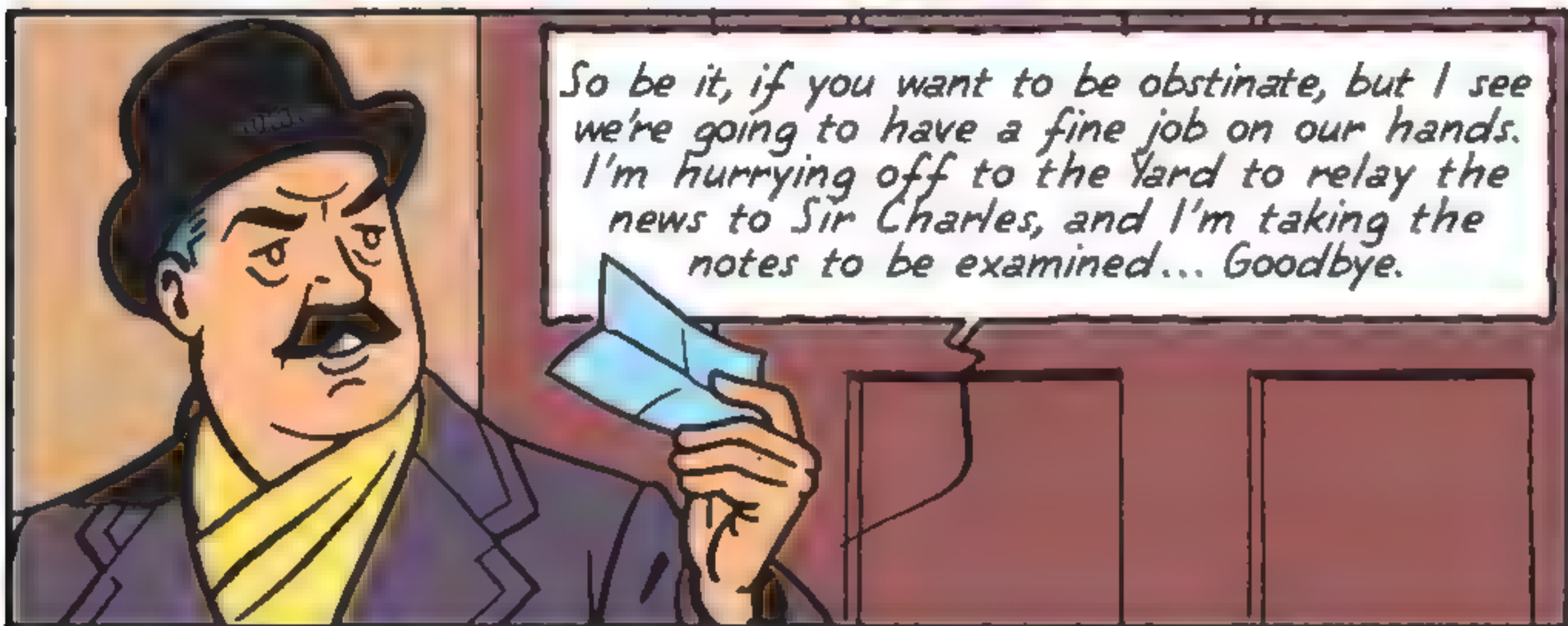
That would be all the more reason not to leave him in the hands of that monster.

I think Blake is right, Kendall.

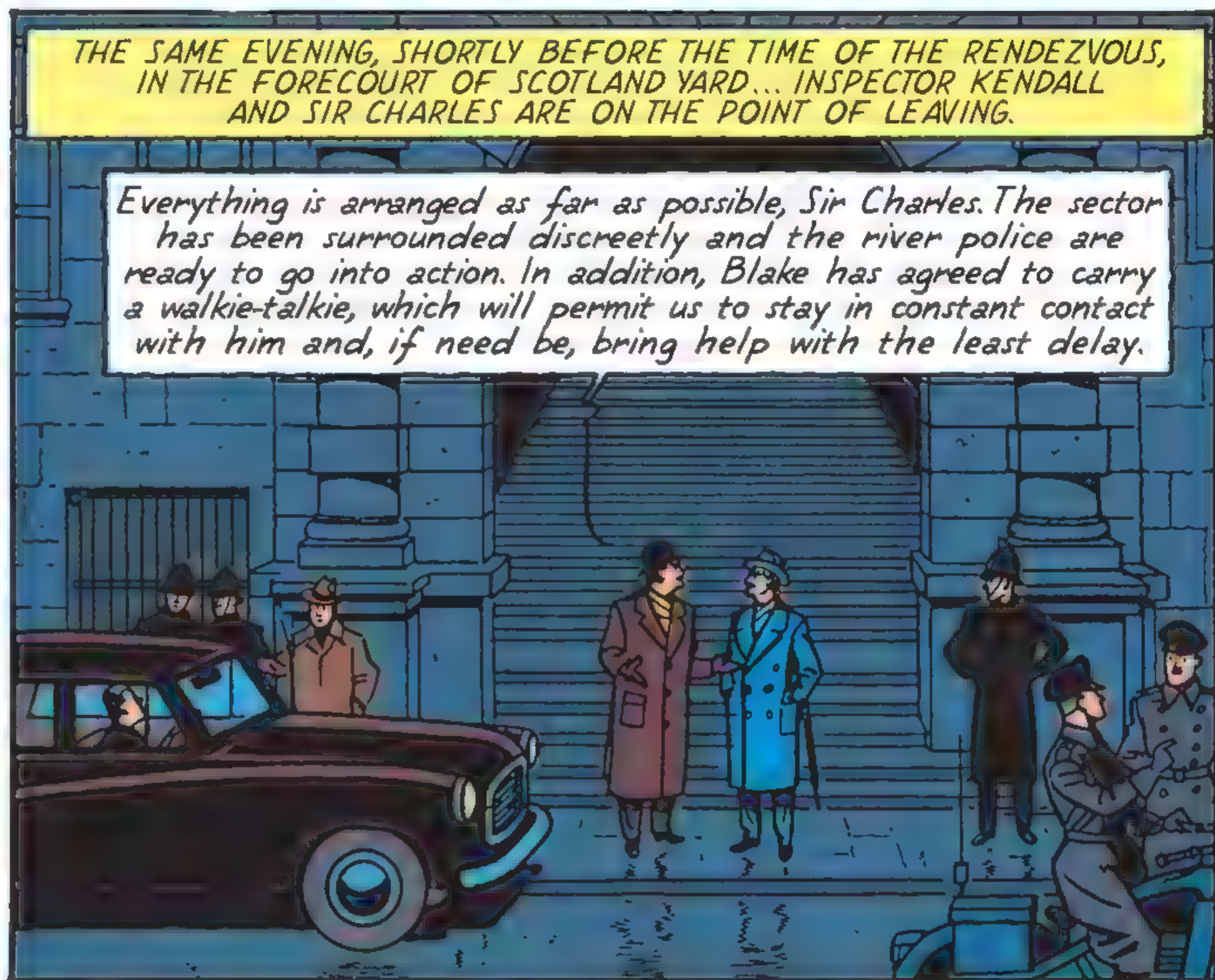


Fine, but in that case, let's go there in force and -

And spoil our chances? No, I must go on my own! Besides, we have been taken in for too long, and it's got to stop.



So be it, if you want to be obstinate, but I see we're going to have a fine job on our hands. I'm hurrying off to the yard to relay the news to Sir Charles, and I'm taking the notes to be examined... Goodbye.



THE SAME EVENING, SHORTLY BEFORE THE TIME OF THE RENDEZVOUS, IN THE FORECOURT OF SCOTLAND YARD... INSPECTOR KENDALL AND SIR CHARLES ARE ON THE POINT OF LEAVING.

Everything is arranged as far as possible, Sir Charles. The sector has been surrounded discreetly and the river police are ready to go into action. In addition, Blake has agreed to carry a walkie-talkie, which will permit us to stay in constant contact with him and, if need be, bring help with the least delay.



If the weather holds, all should go well.

I hope so. Good luck, Kendall. I shall be at the Home Office with the minister to wait for your report.



AT THE SAME TIME IN PARK LANE...

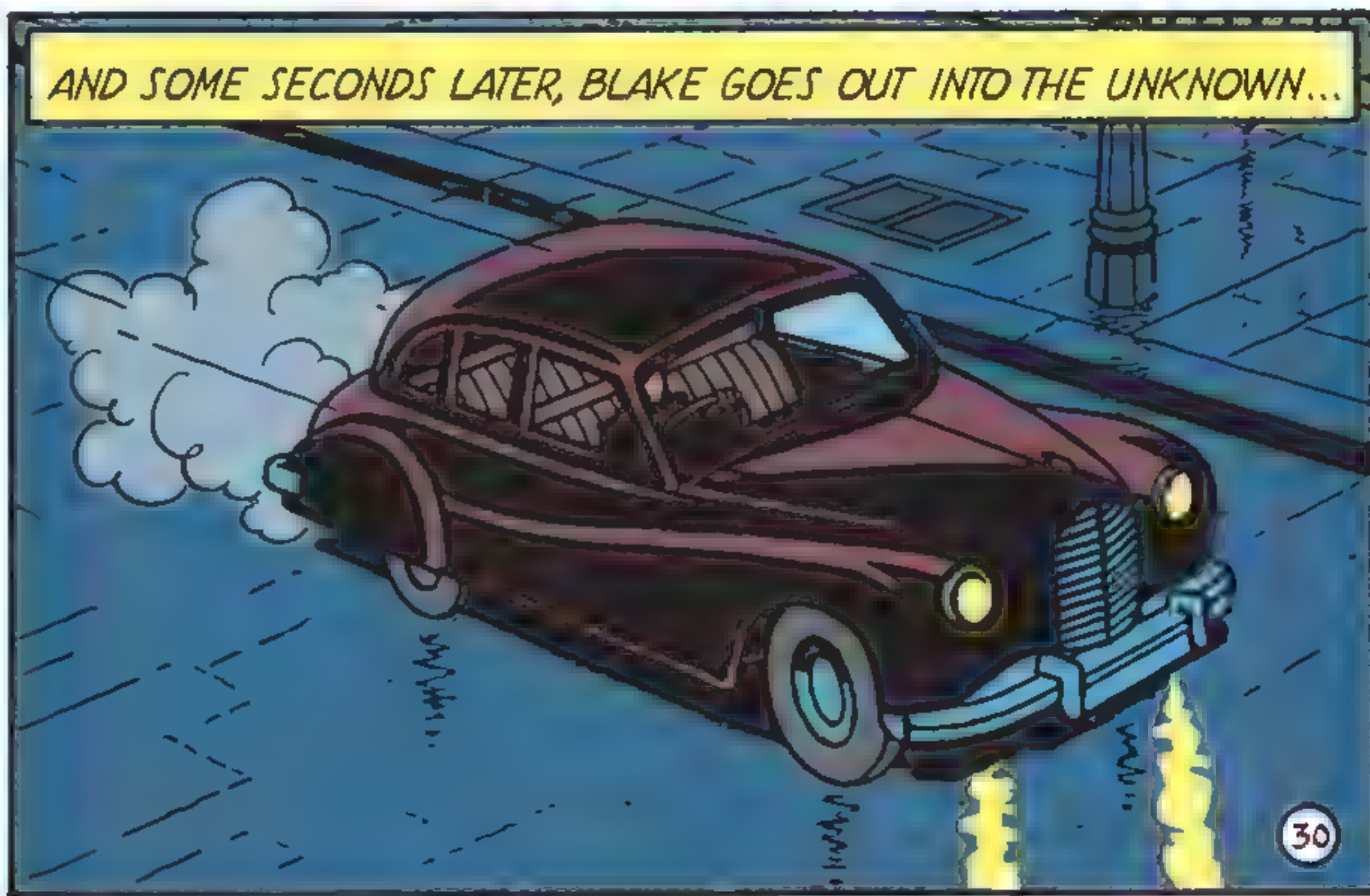
Ingenious, this walkie-talkie, isn't it? The antenna points downwards and is hidden, just like a small earphone, and this sort of mike enables me to speak while hardly moving my lips.

Yes, it'll be perfect as long as you're in the open air, but watch out for places under cover.

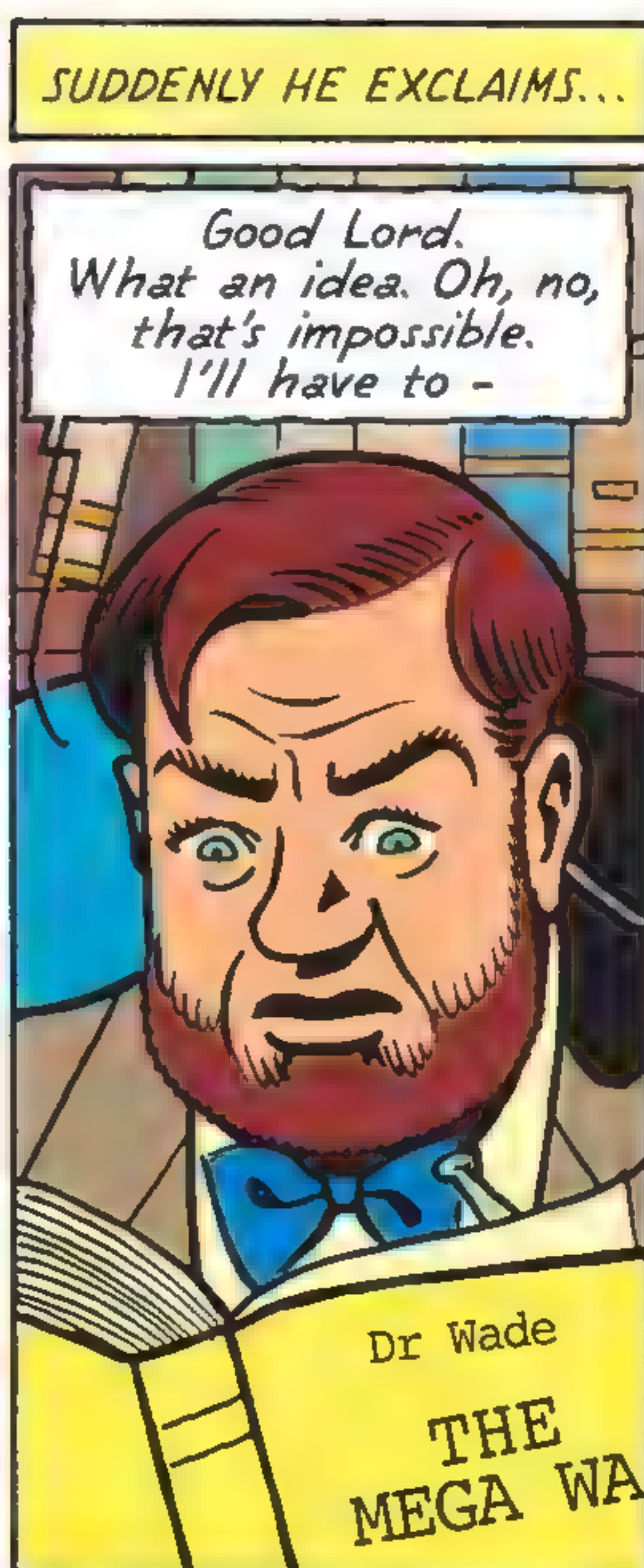
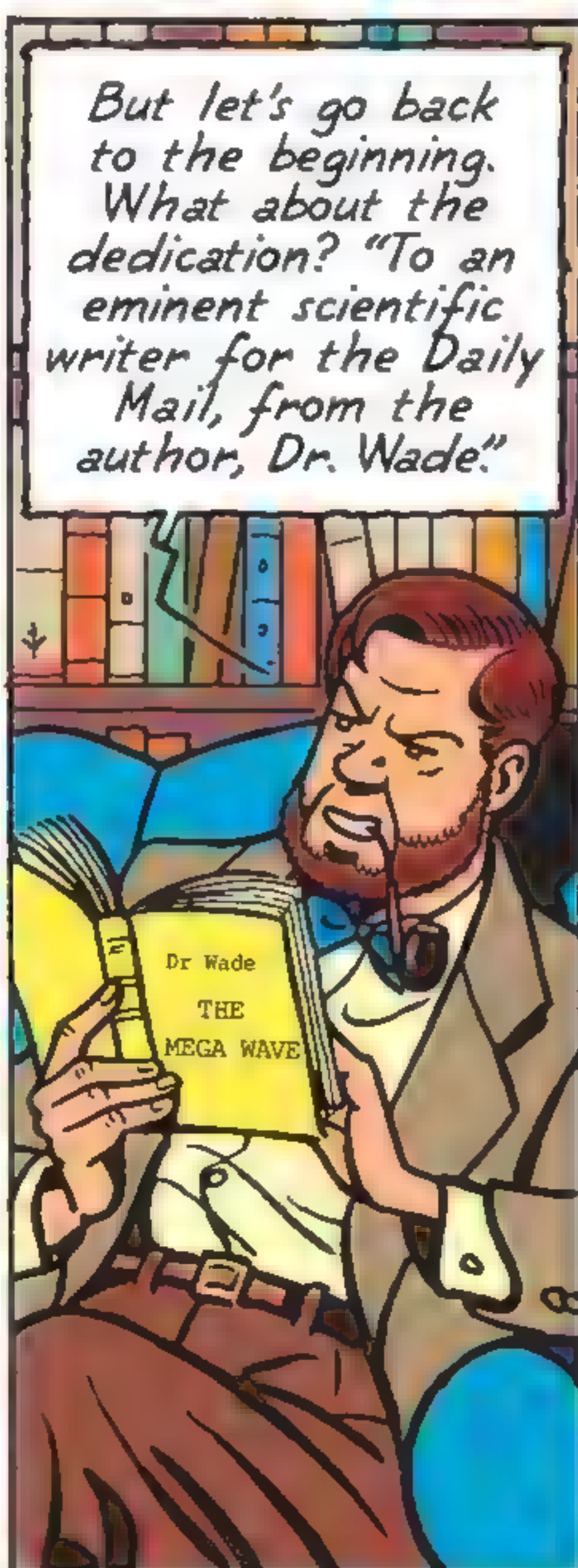
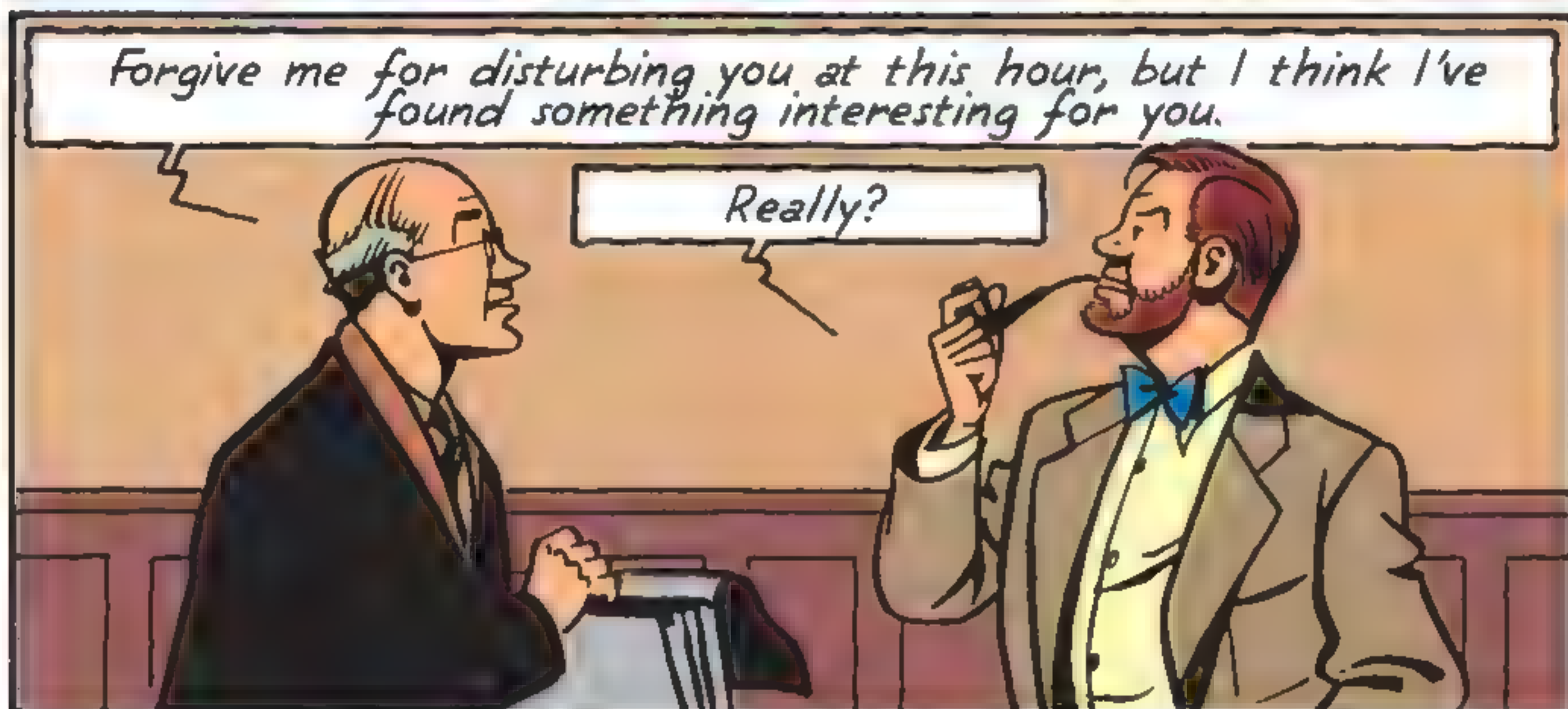
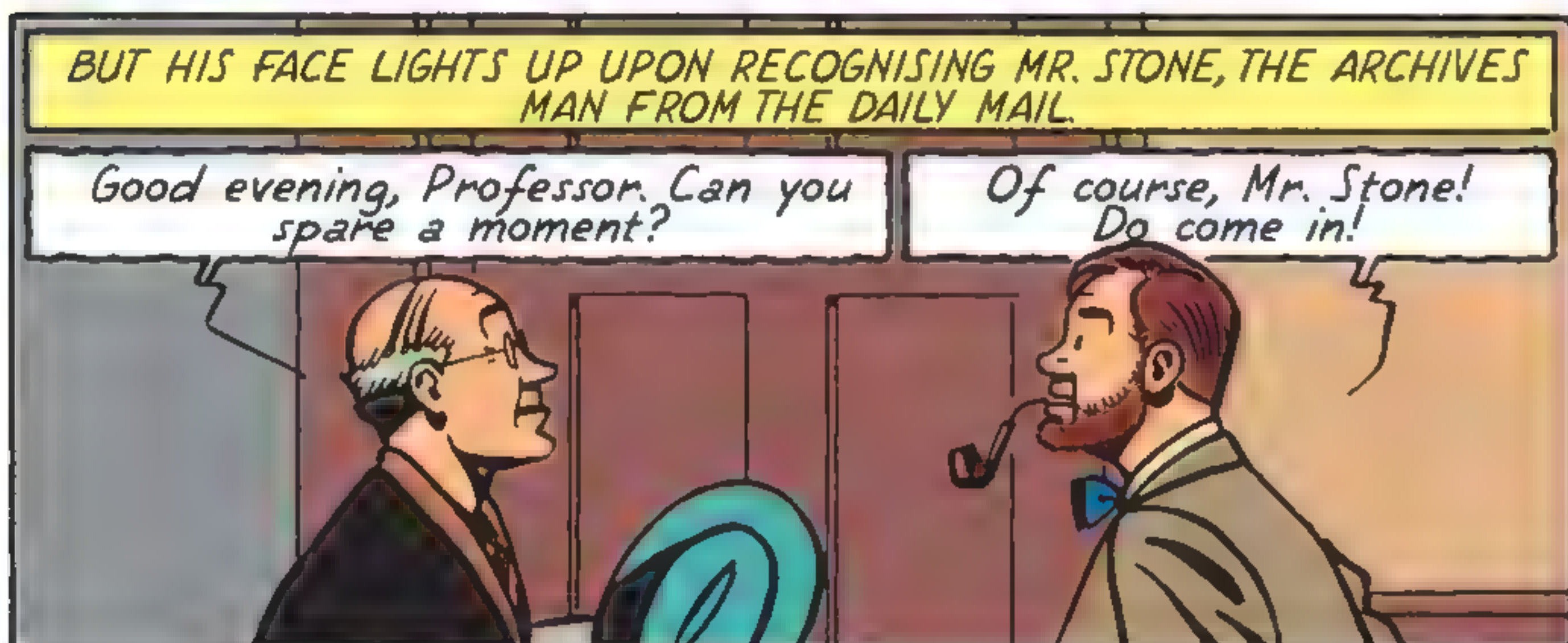
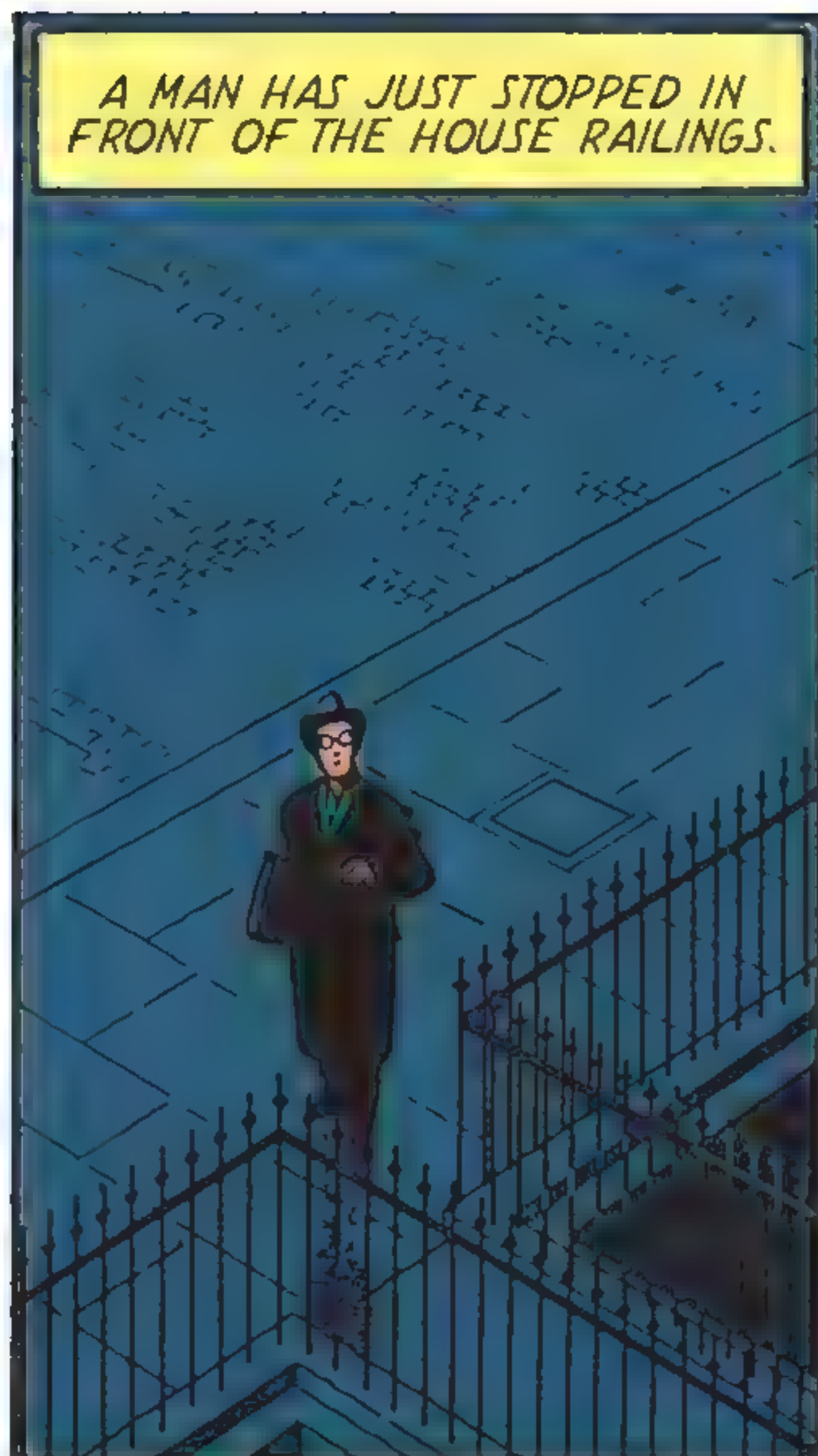


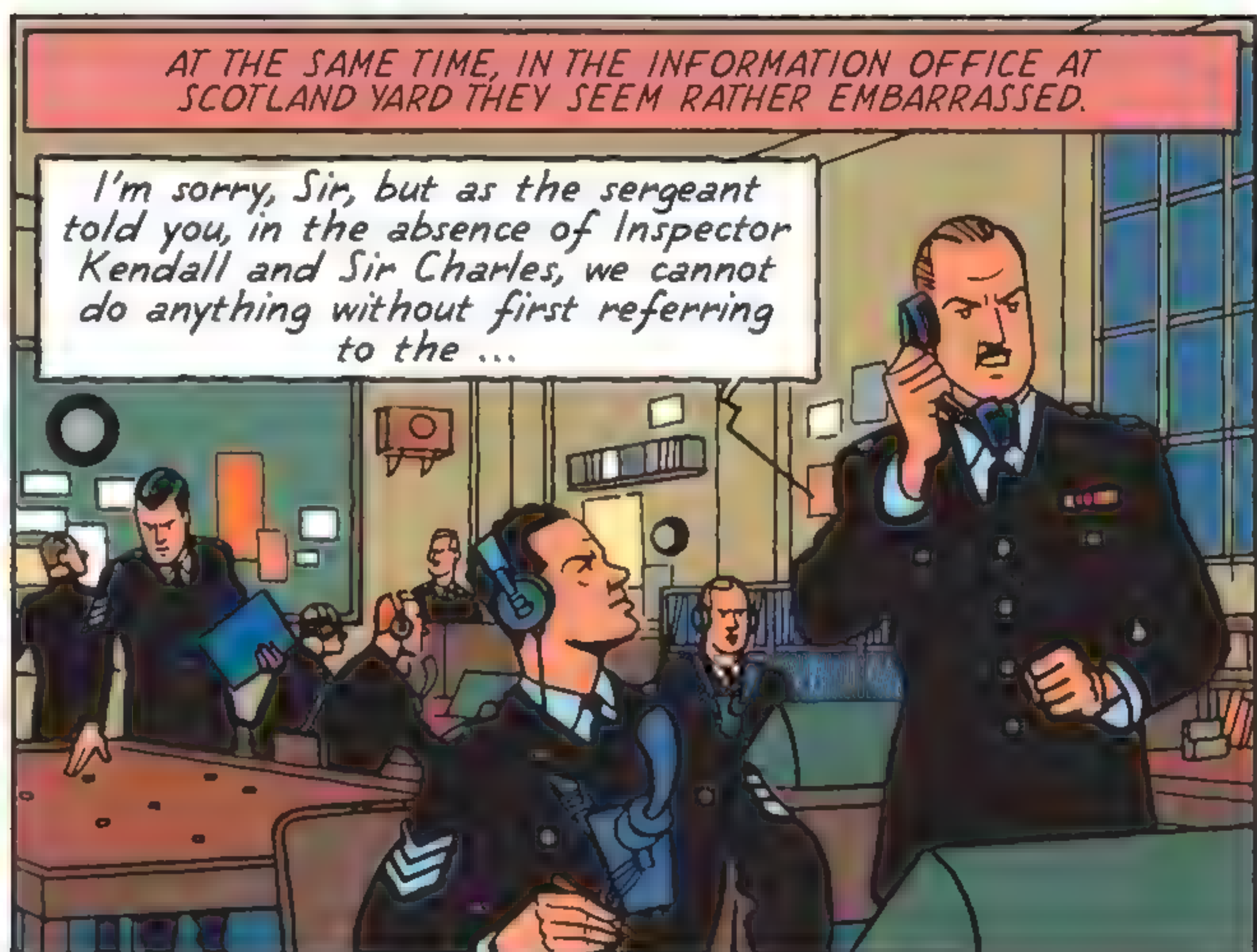
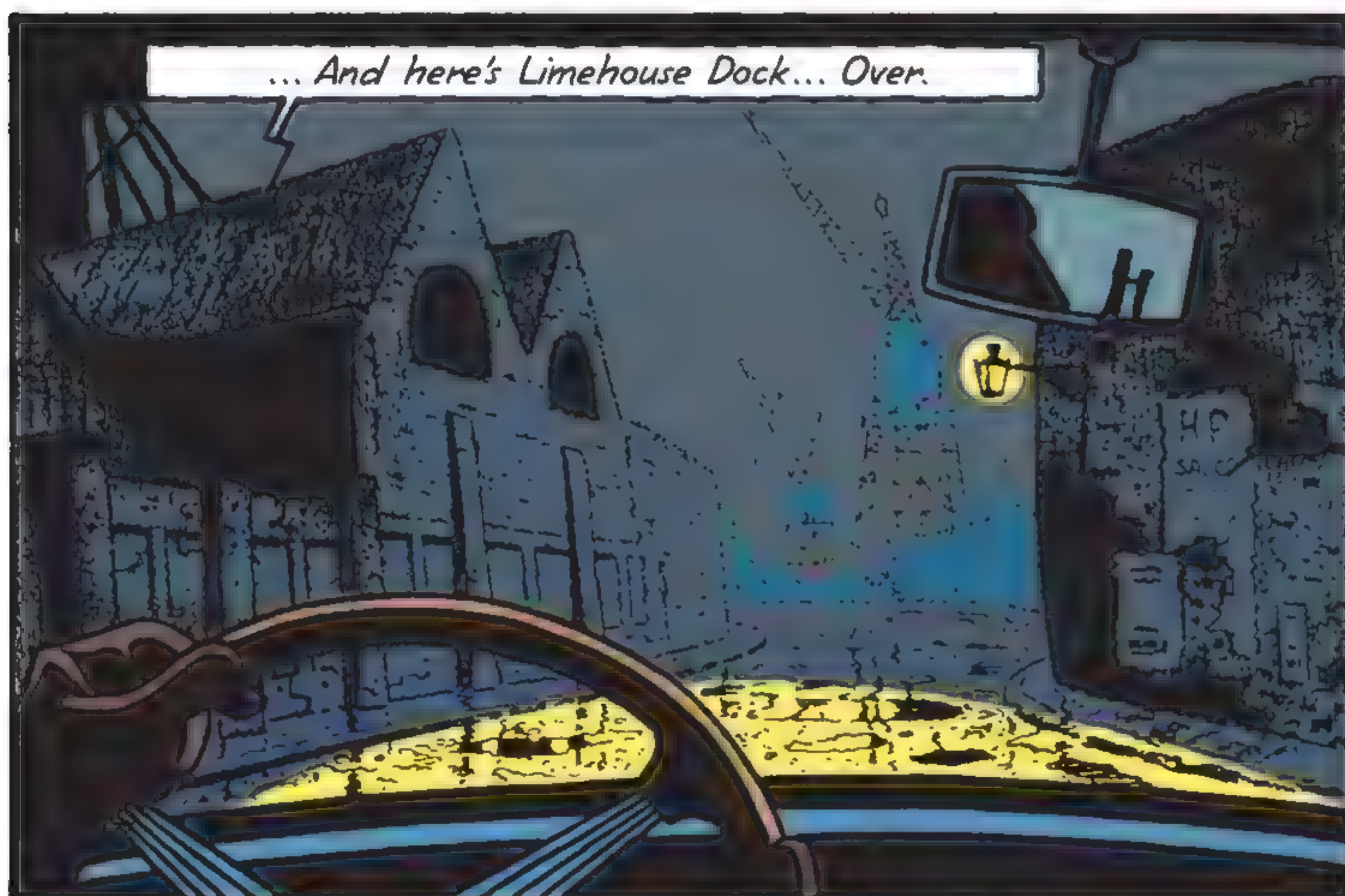
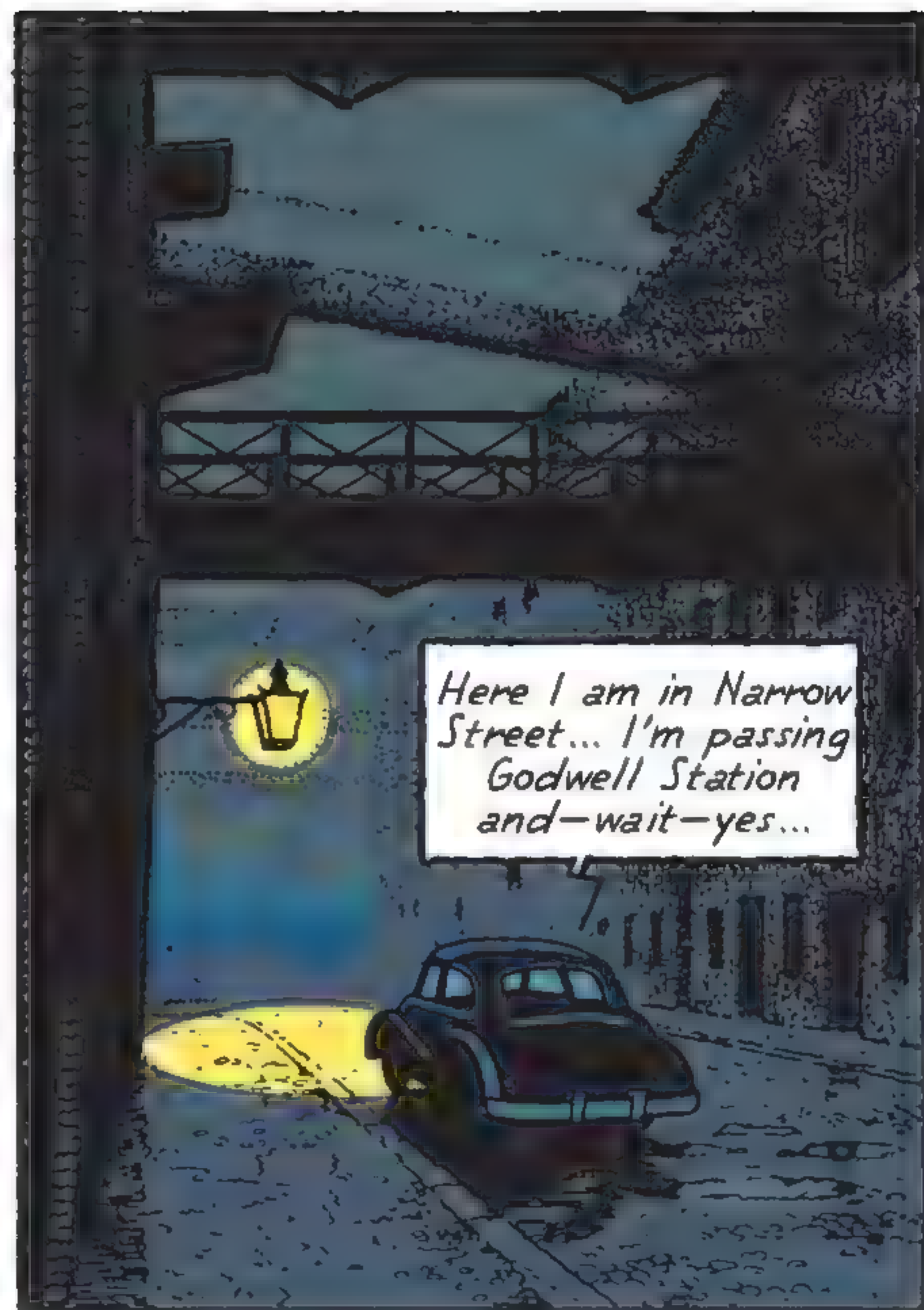
So you really don't want me to accompany you?

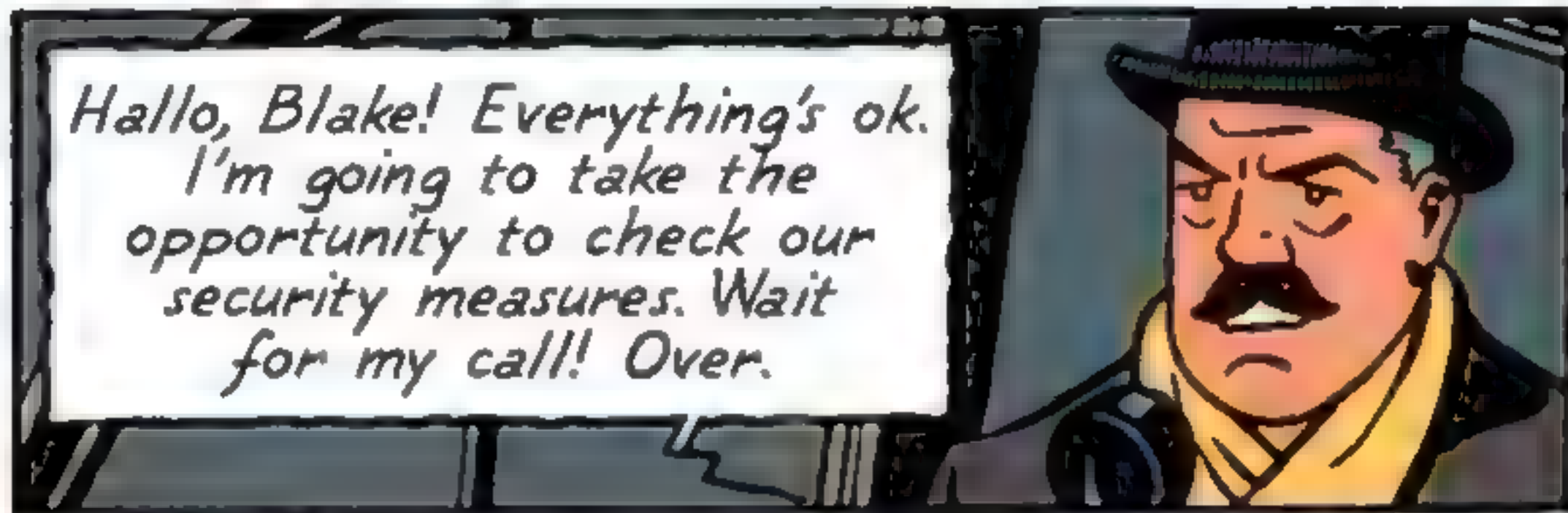
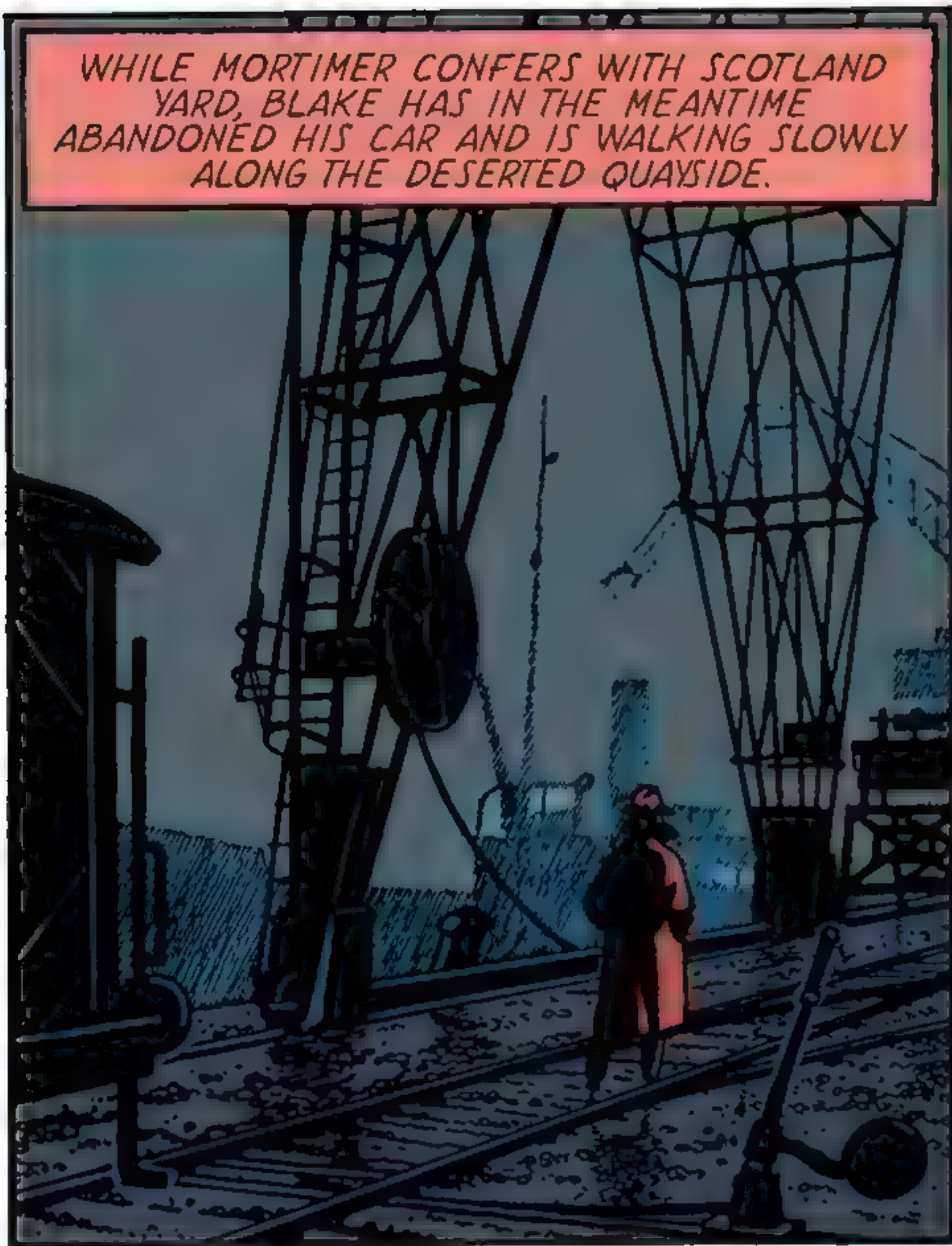
No, old chap. I must operate alone. Besides, at the slightest alarm I'll call Kendall on the radio.

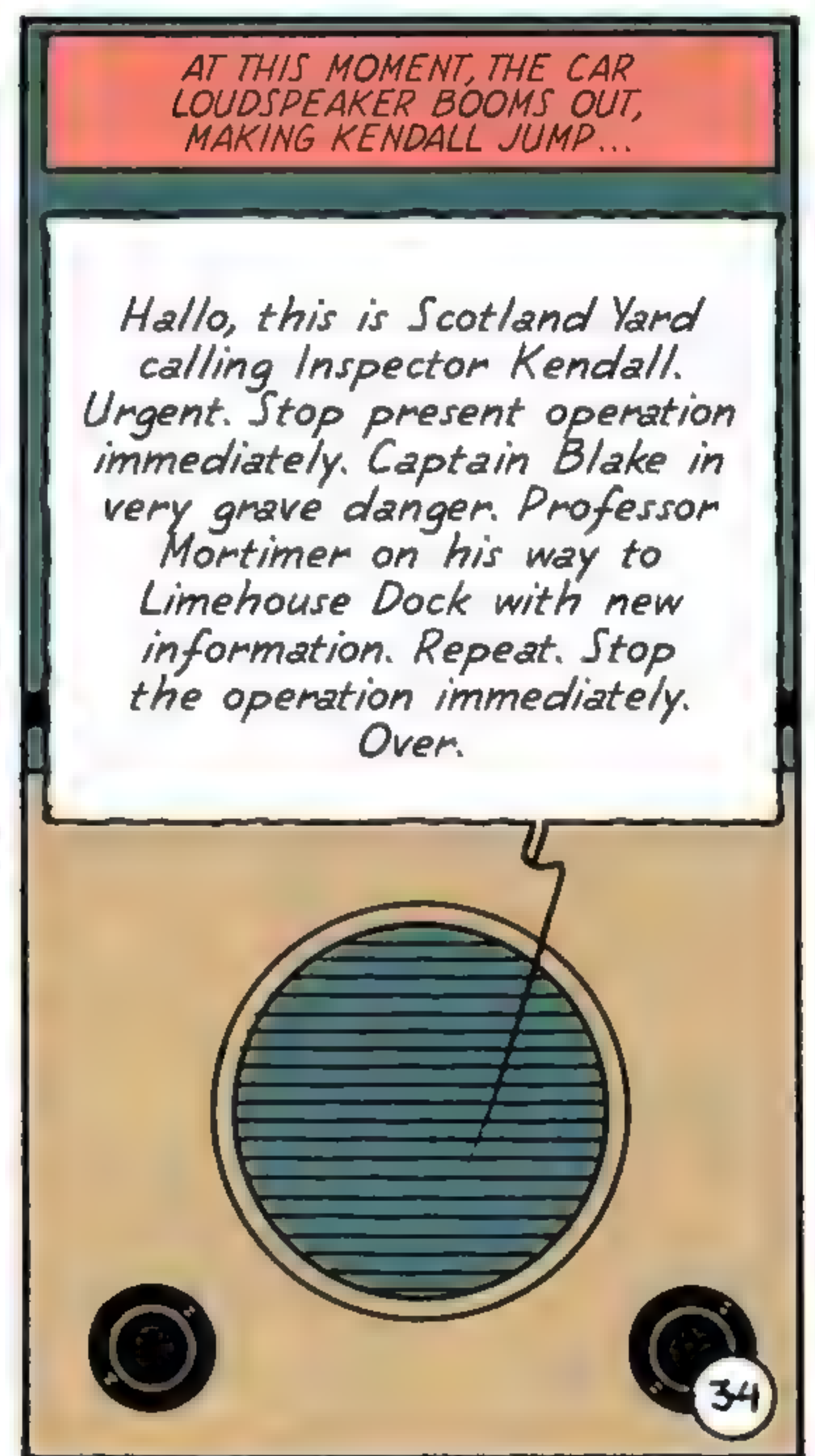
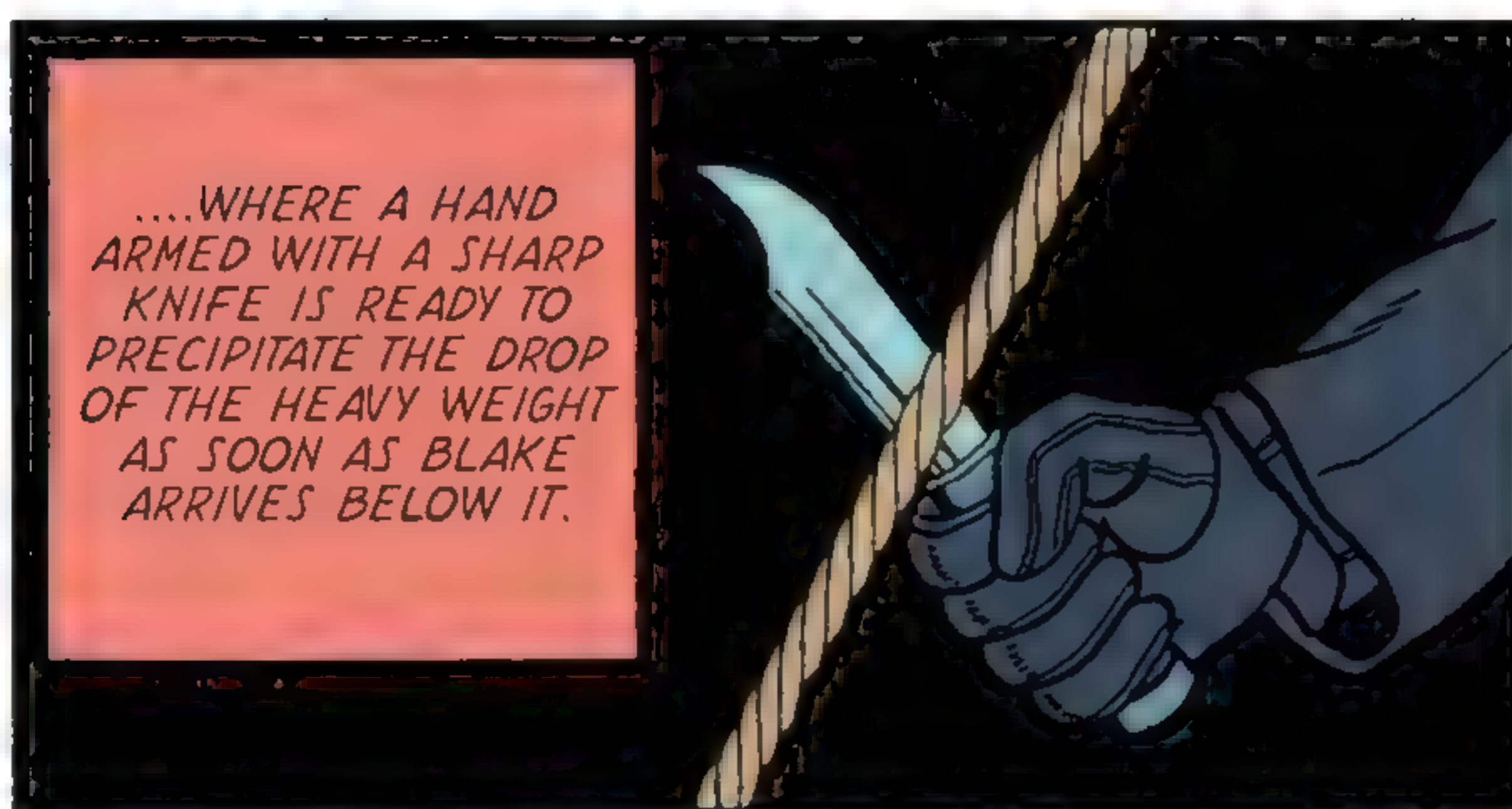
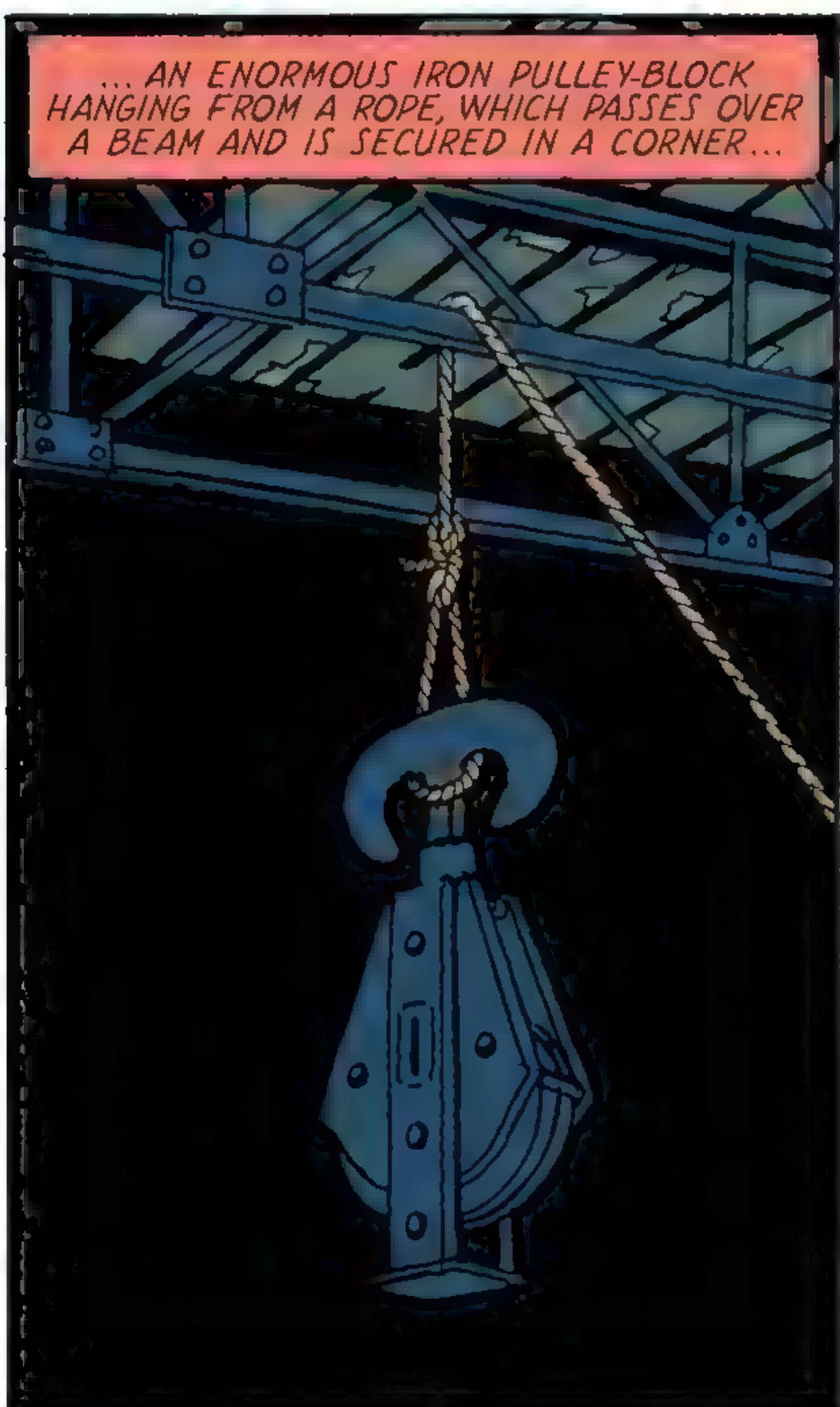


AND SOME SECONDS LATER, BLAKE GOES OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN...





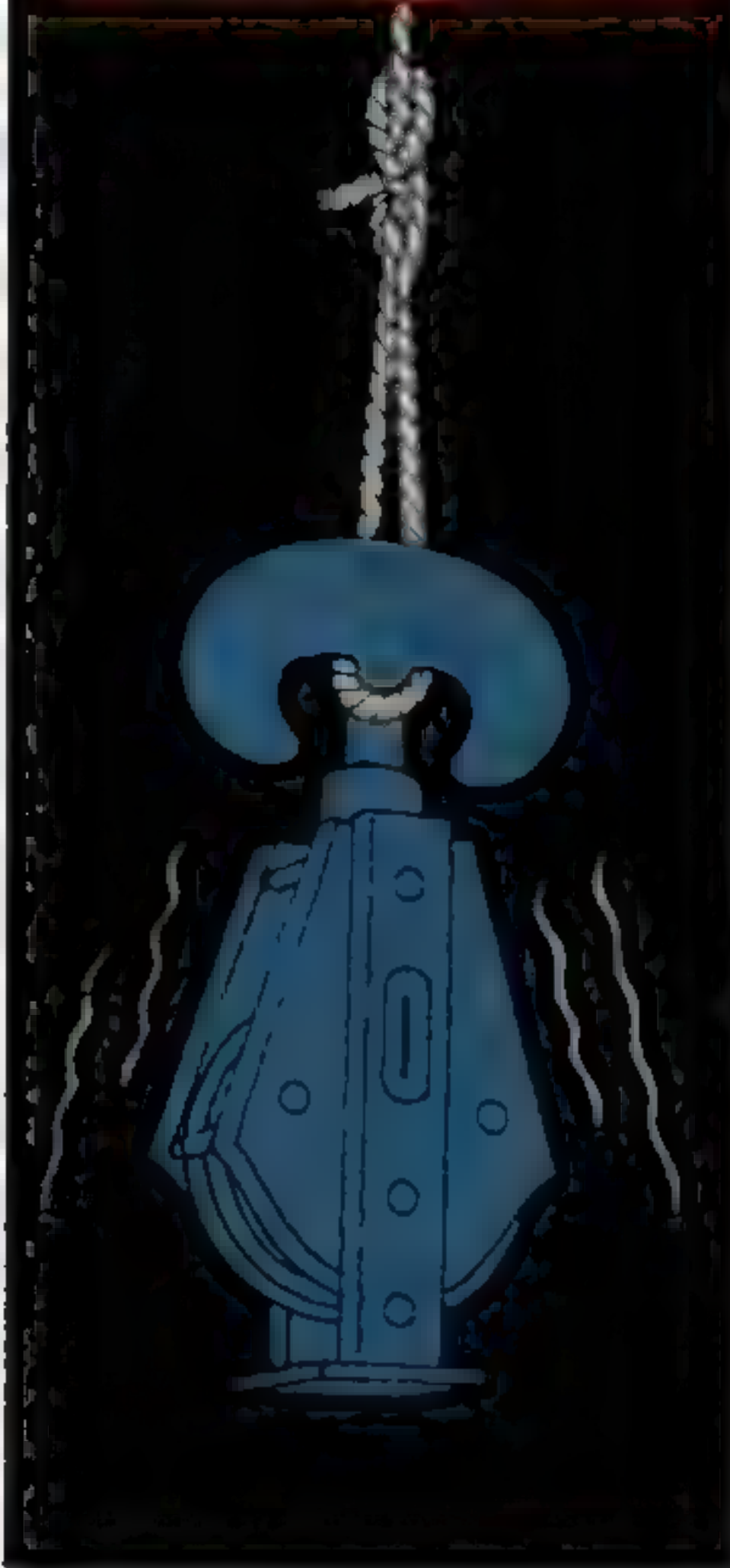




HOWEVER, BLAKE, UNAWARE OF THE TERRIBLE DEATH THREAT HANGING OVER HIM IN THE DARKNESS, ADVANCES ALONG THE NARROW FOOT BRIDGE, WHERE THE SMALL FLAME OF A CANDLE IS FLICKERING...



AND ALREADY THE KEEN BLADE IS PENETRATING THE ROPE, MAKING THE HEAVY IRON MASS SHAKE.



BUT BLAKE NOW PASSES BENEATH A HOLE IN THE ROOF.

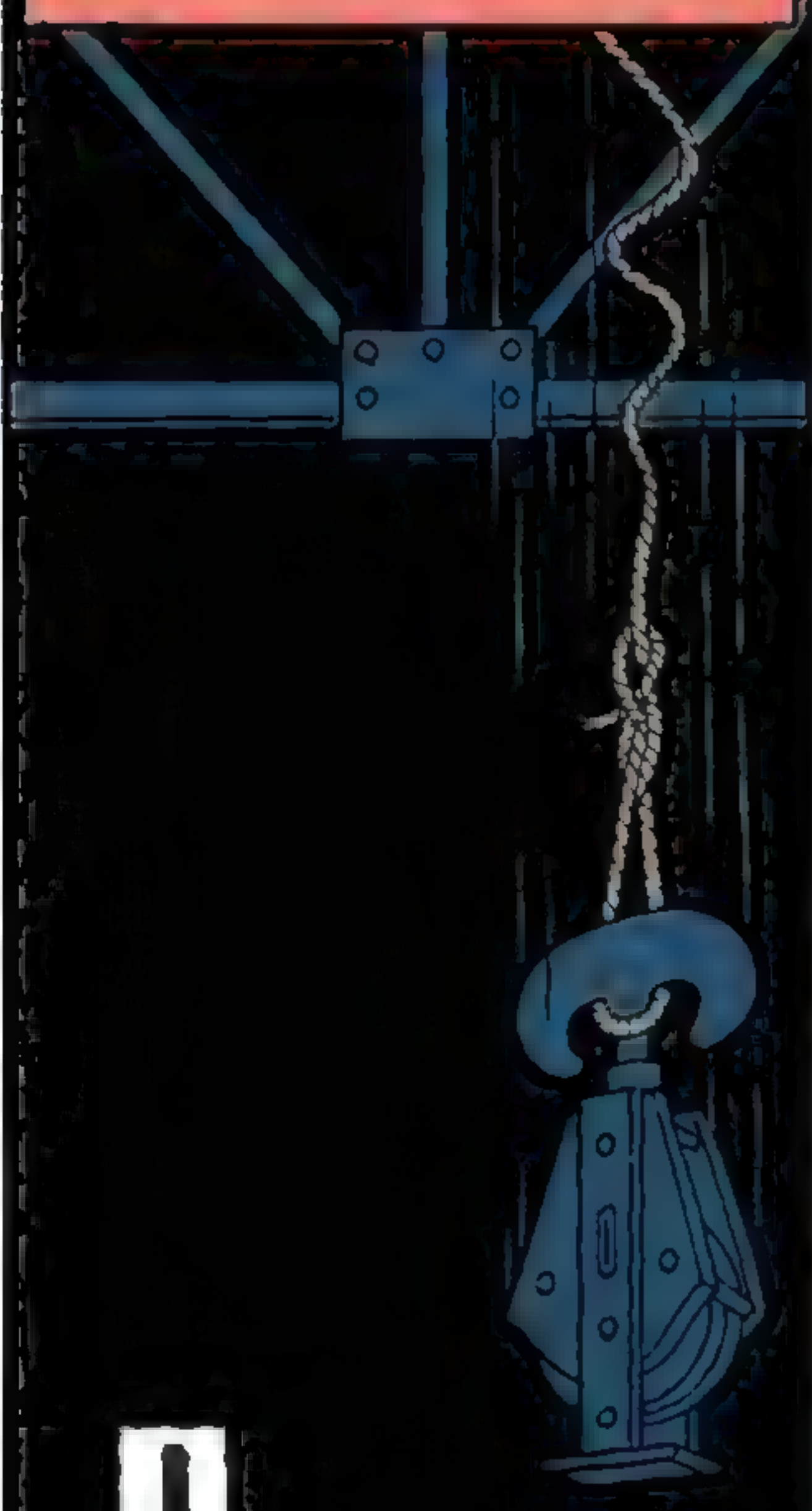


RADIO COMMUNICATION IS SUDDENLY RESTORED AS IF BY A MIRACLE, AND BLAKE HEARS KENDALL CALL OUT...

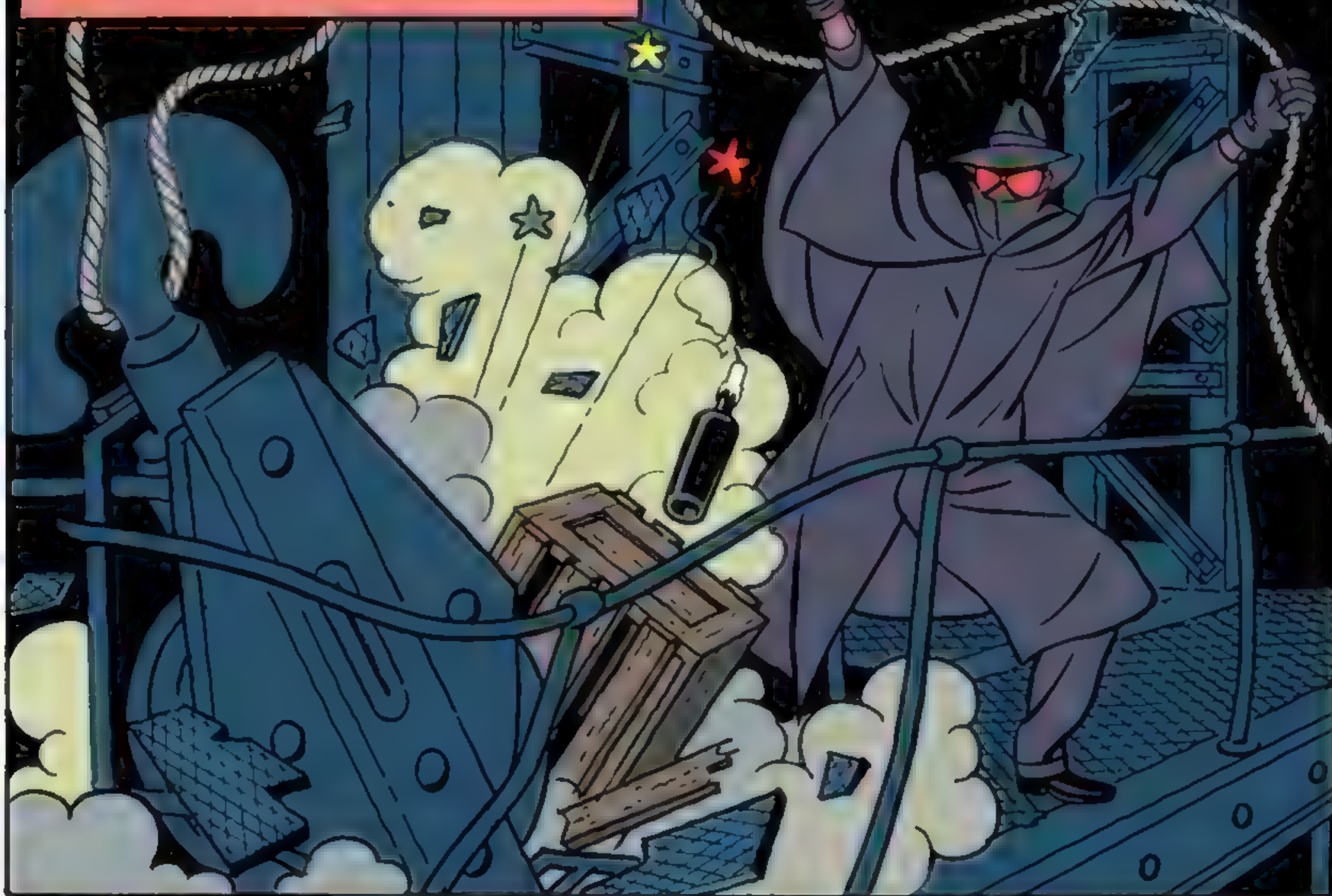
What? Blake is in very grave danger?



AT THESE WORDS THE CAPTAIN STOPS INSTINCTIVELY, AS THE HUGE PULLEY-BLOCK WHISTLES DOWN THROUGH THE AIR...



...TO FALL WITH A GREAT CRASH AT HIS FEET. THE YELLOW "M" RUSHES FROM HIS HIDING PLACE SHOUTING WITH RAGE.



RHAAAAAAA!!!...

HE THEN LEAPS ONTO ONE OF THE WALL SUPPORTS AND CLIMBS UP IT WITH THE AGILITY OF A MONKEY.



ALTHOUGH HE HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE EFFICACY OF HIS BULLETS AGAINST THIS WEIRD ADVERSARY, BLAKE RECOVERS FROM HIS FRIGHT AND FIRES TWO SHOTS.

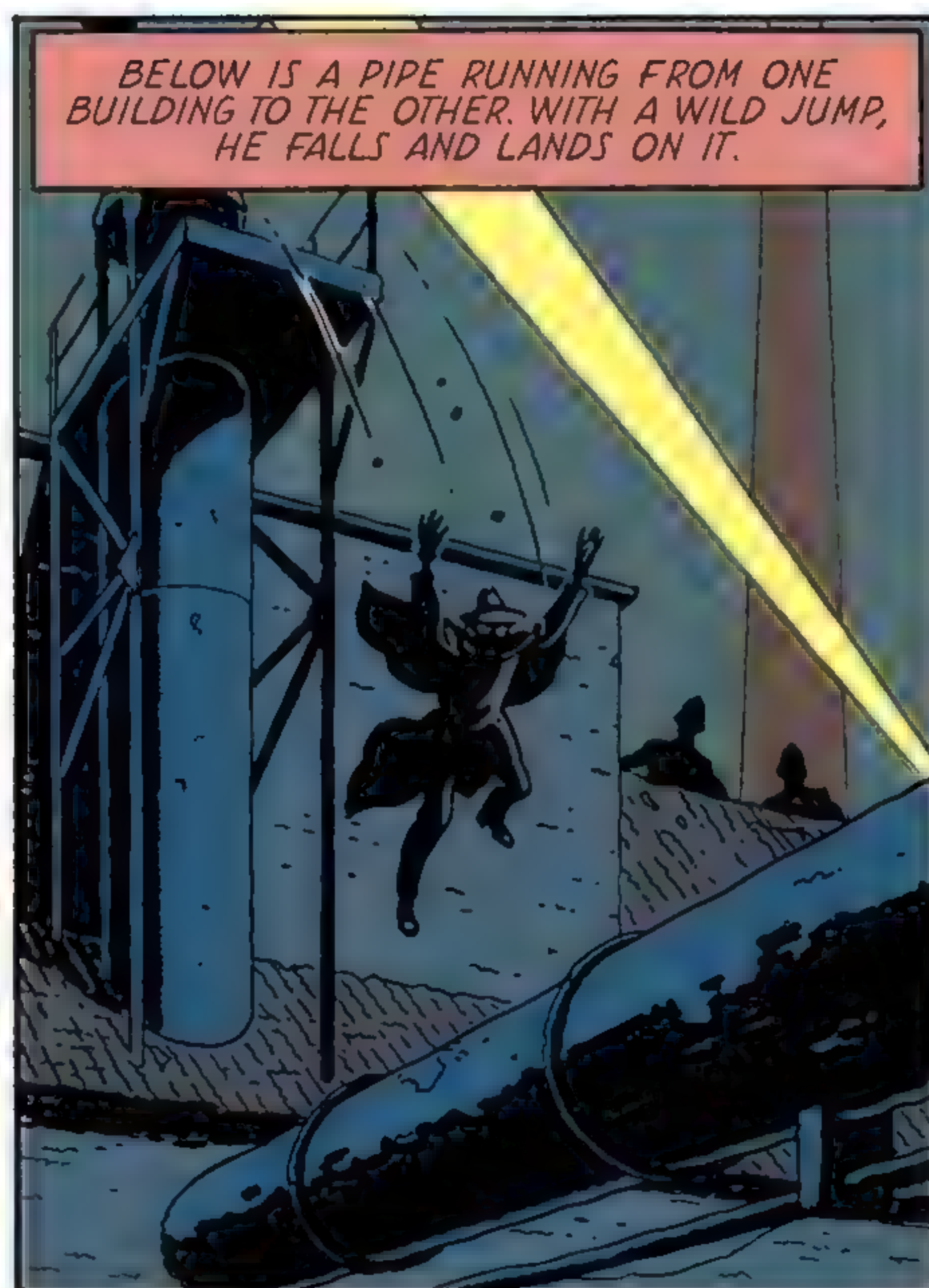
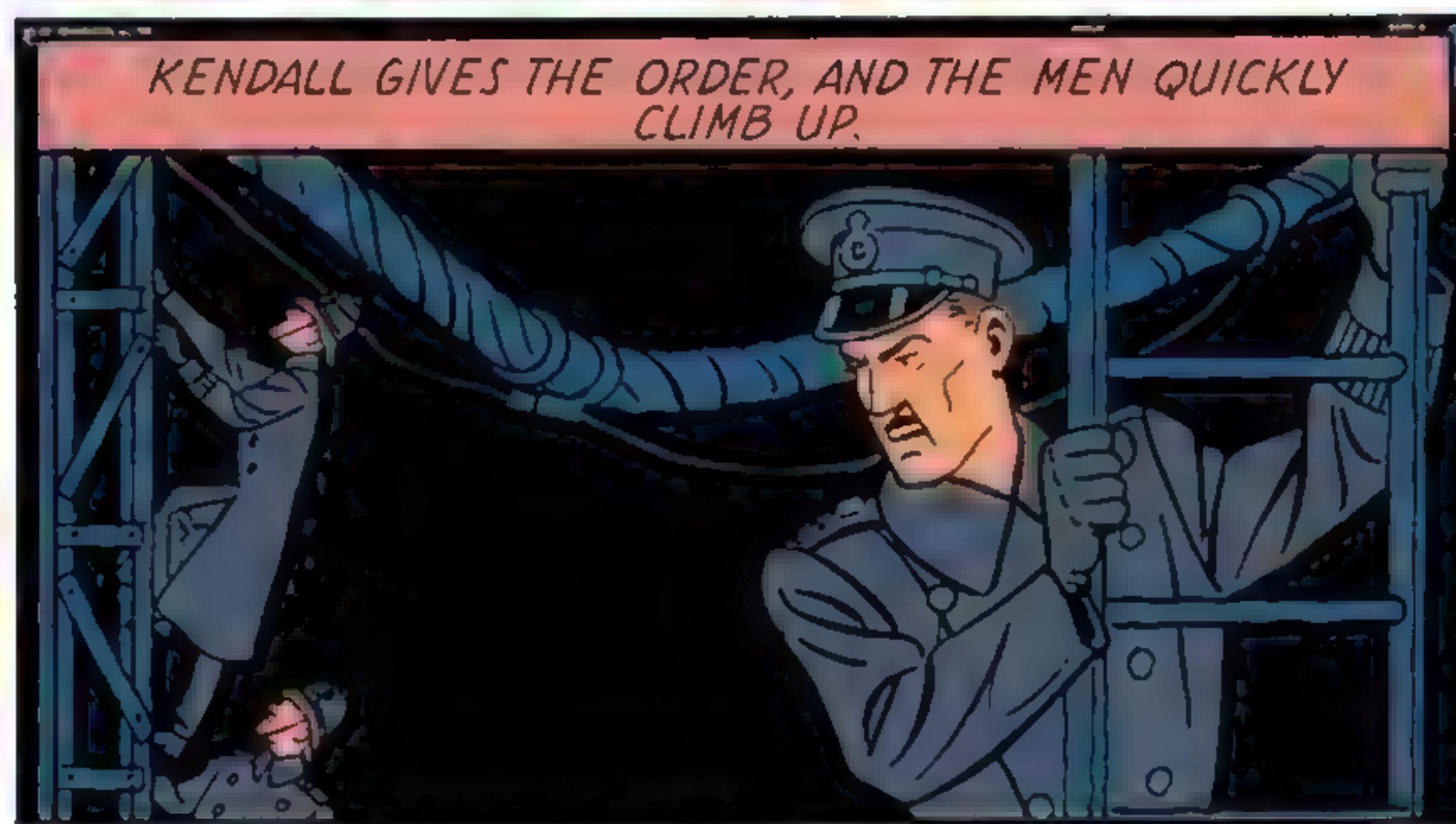


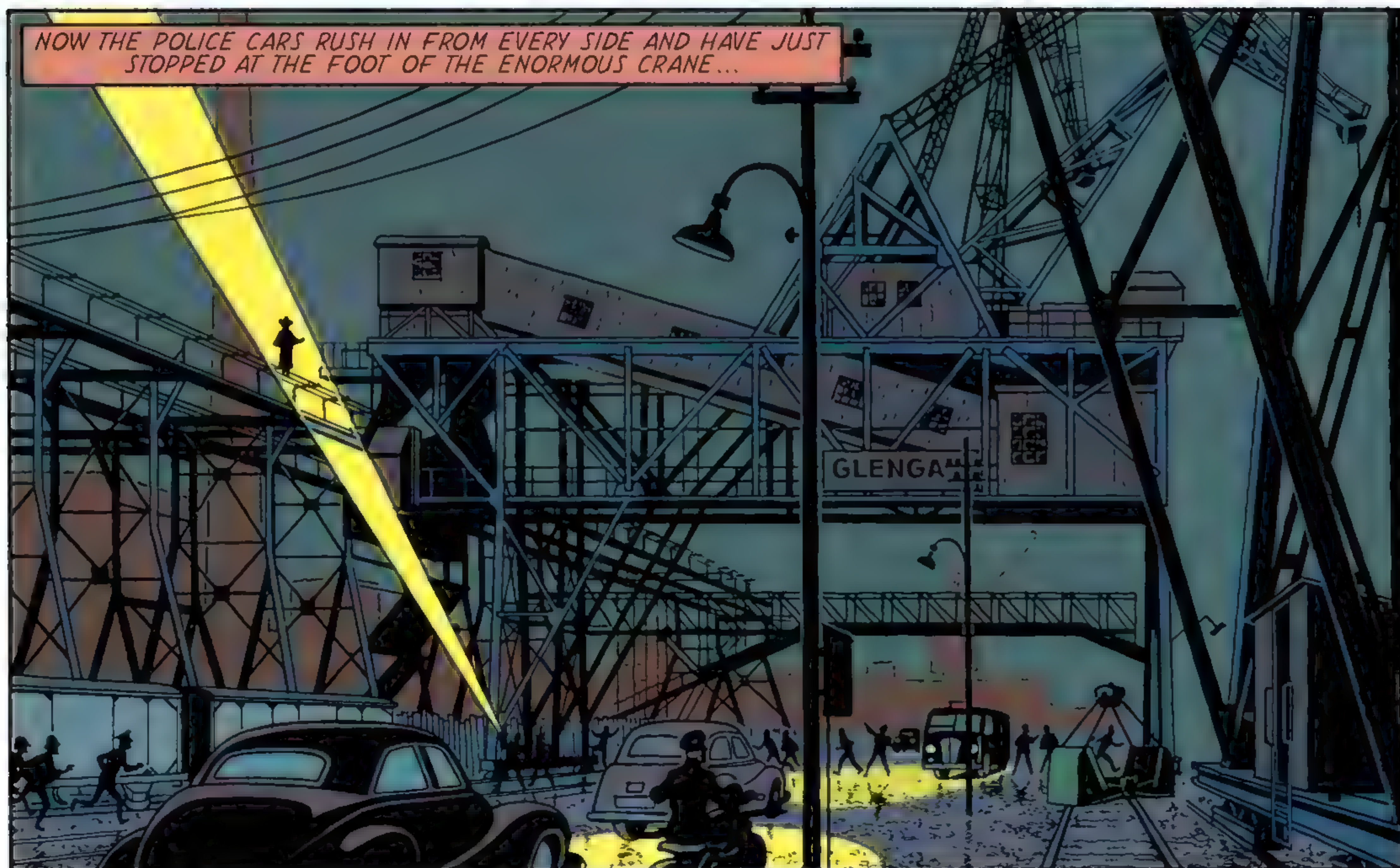
Good gracious! Did you hear that?

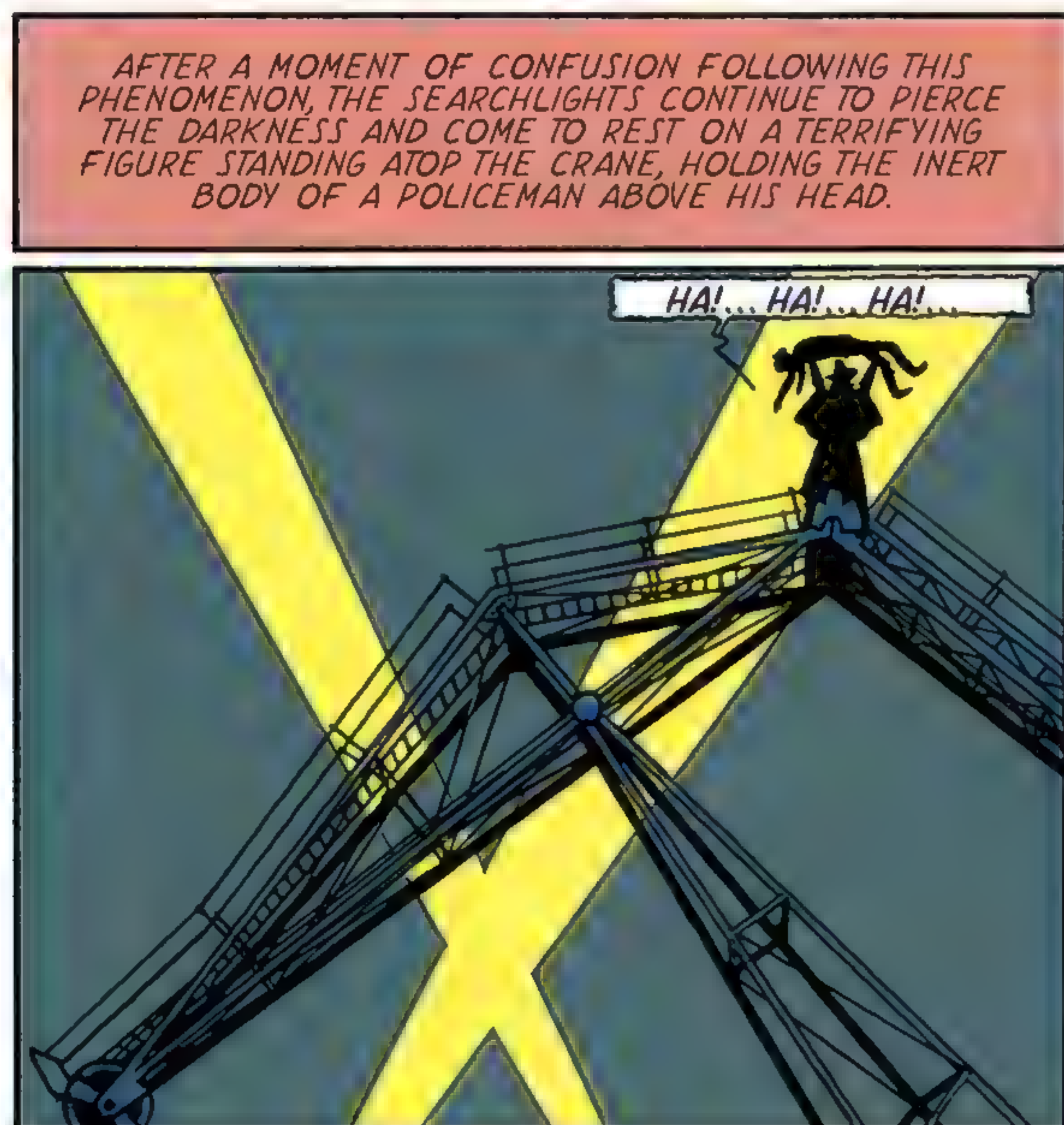
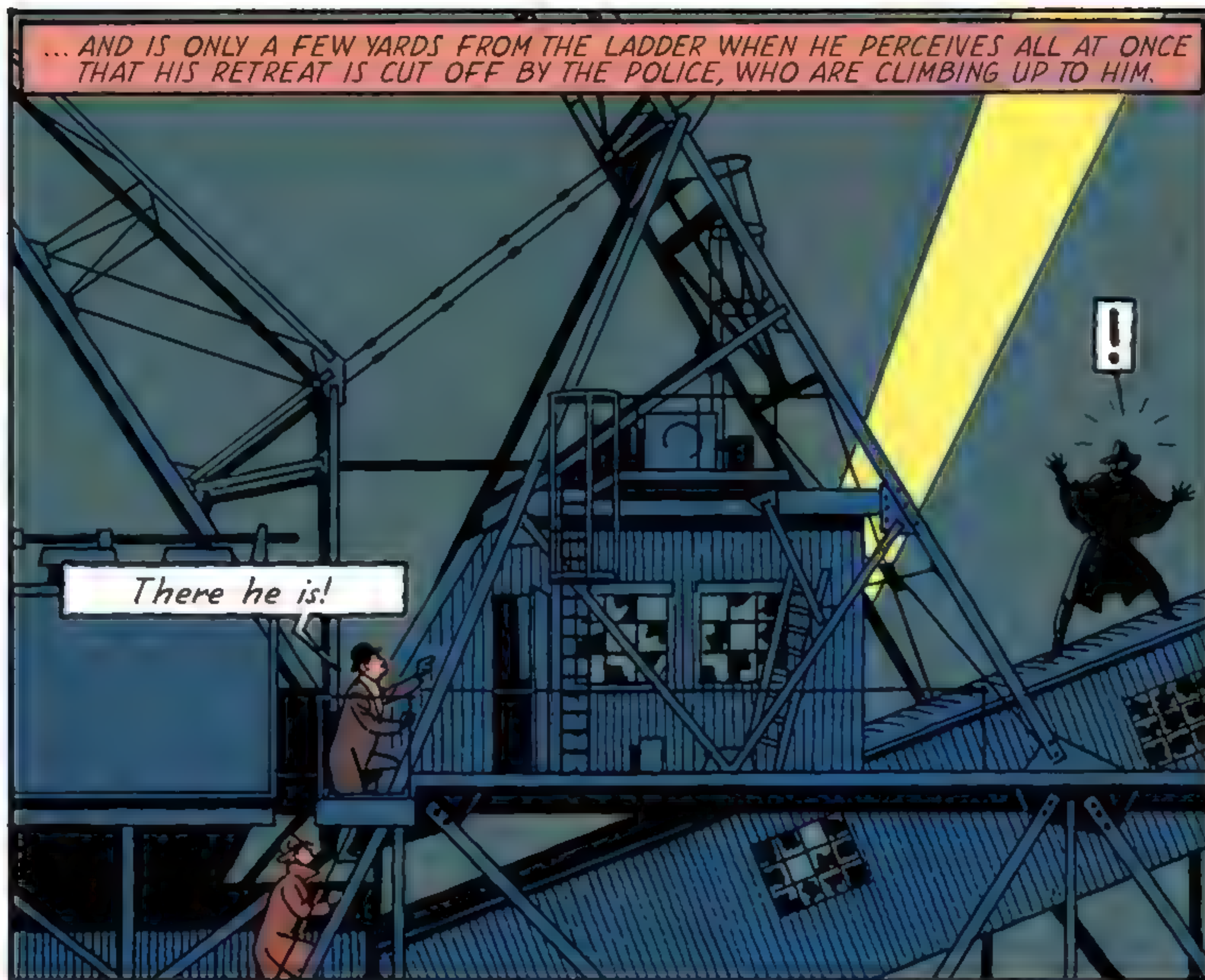


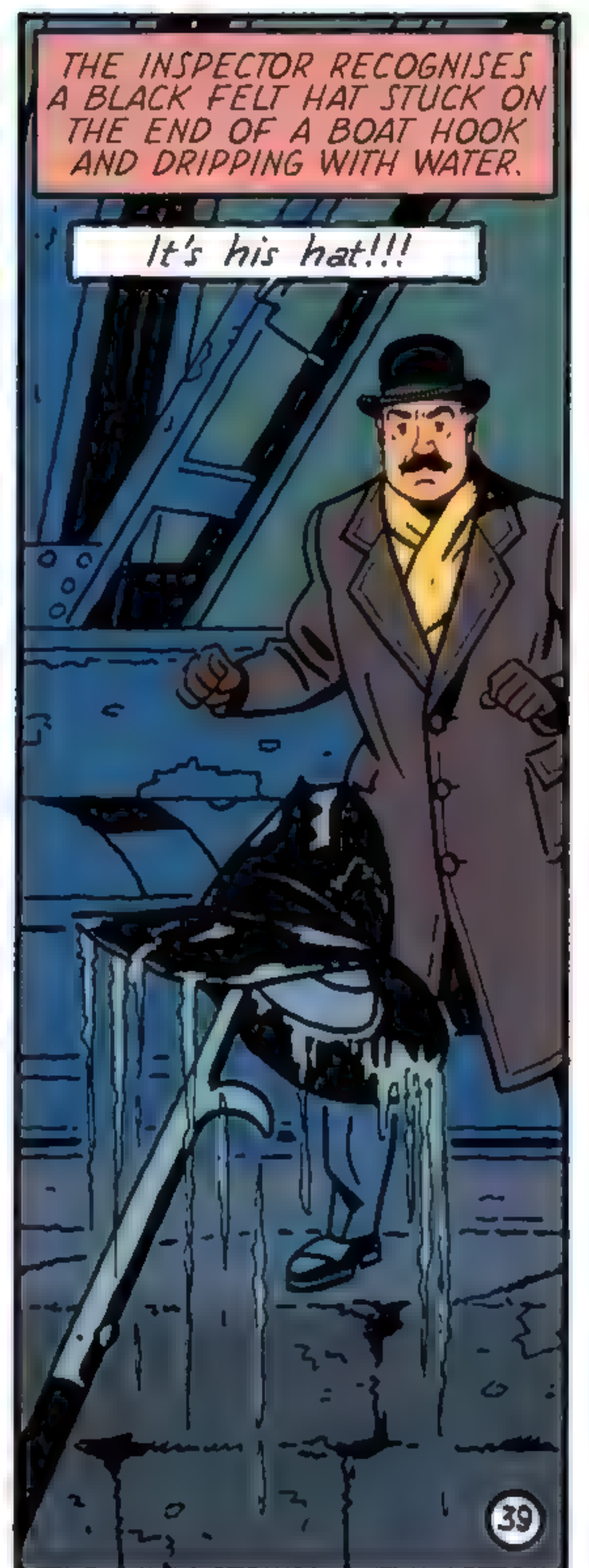
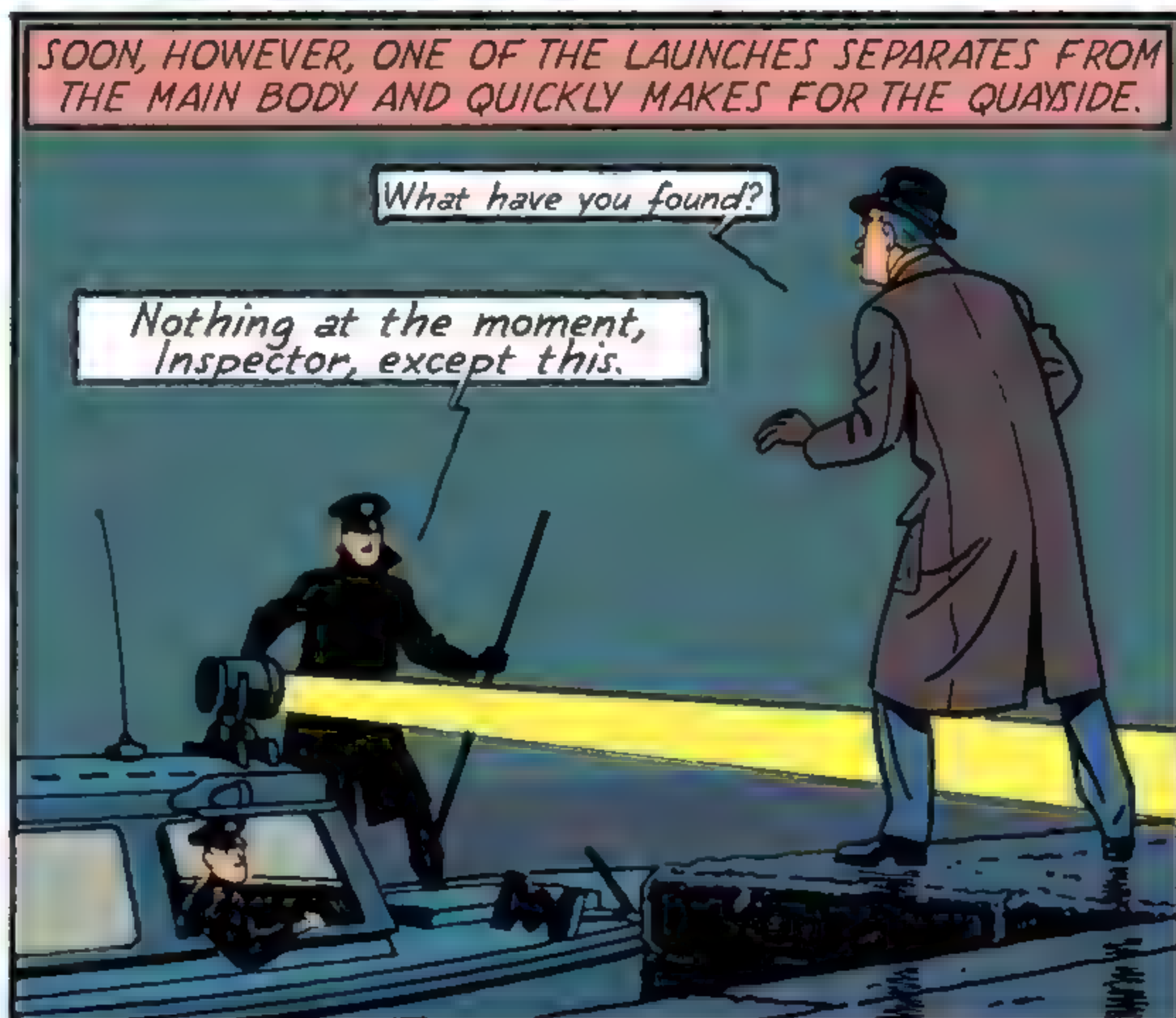
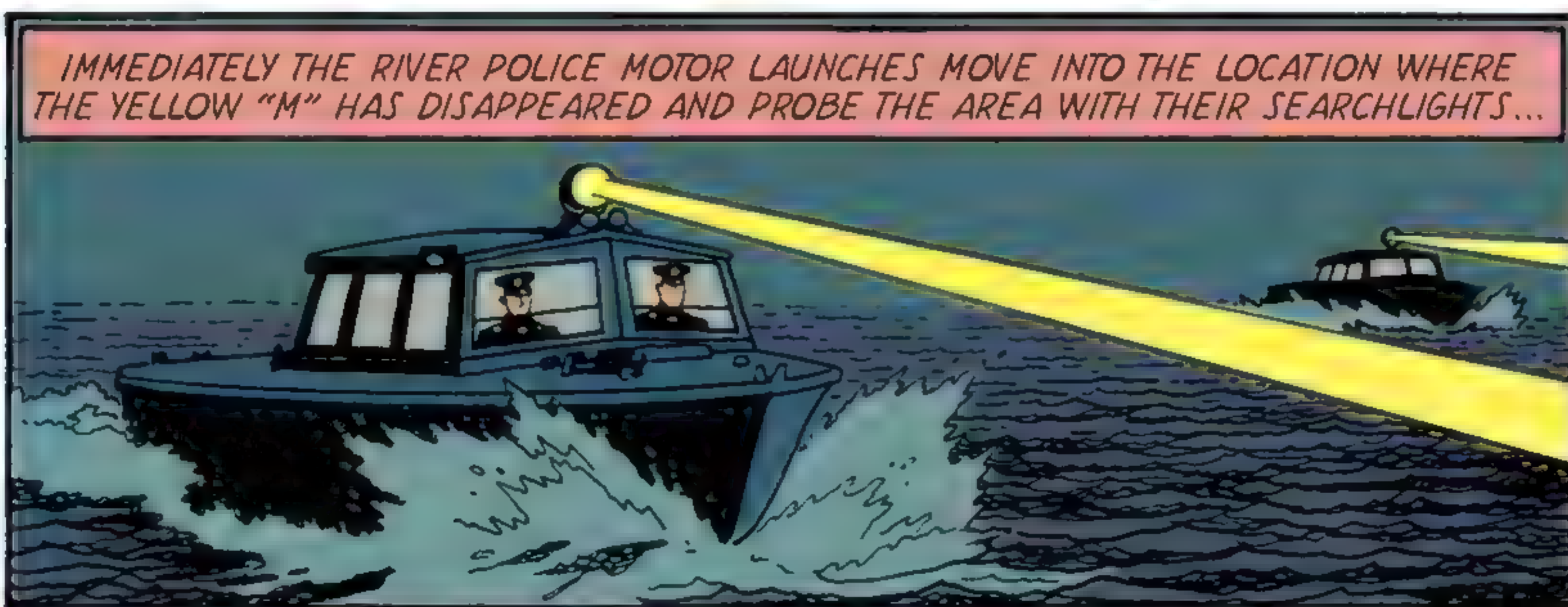
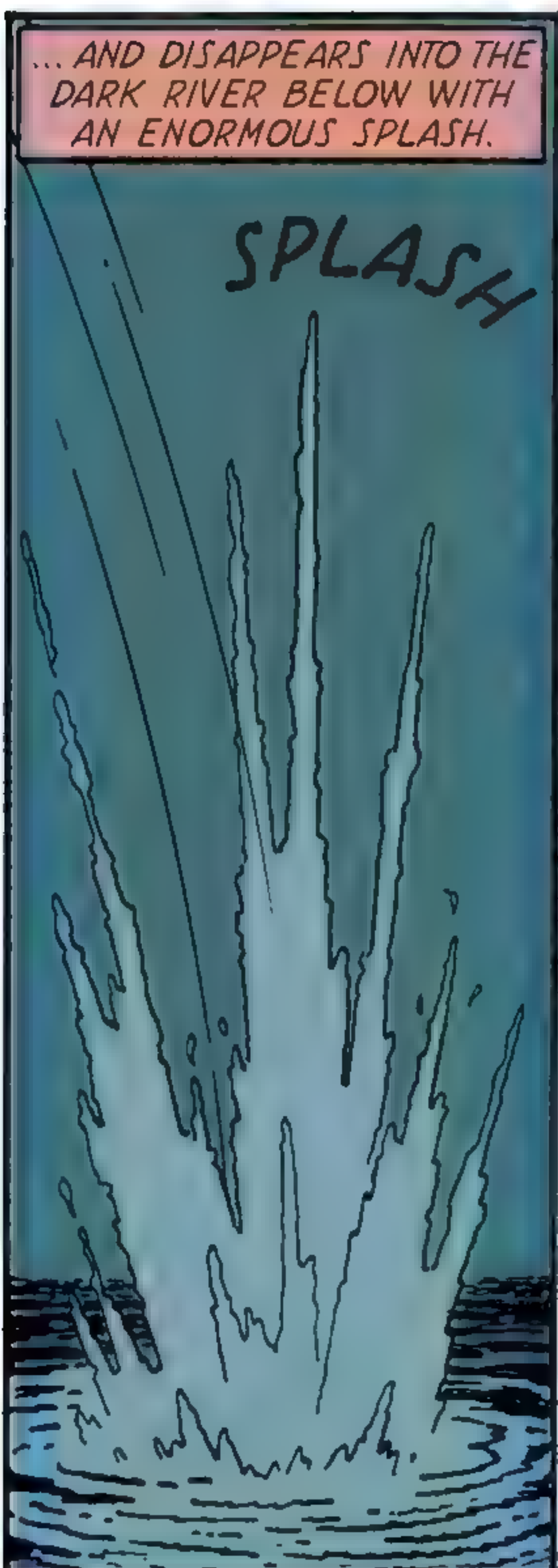
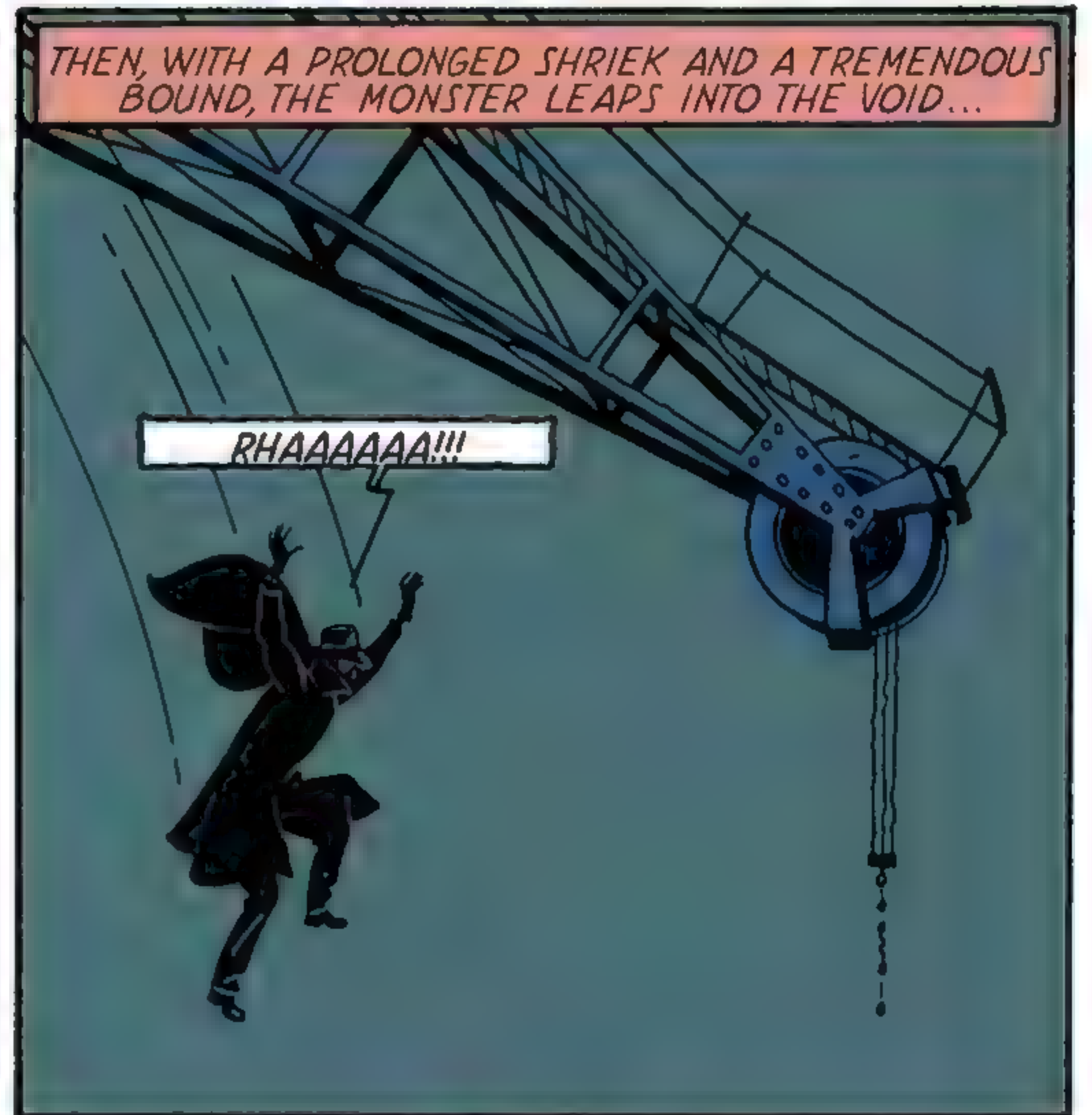
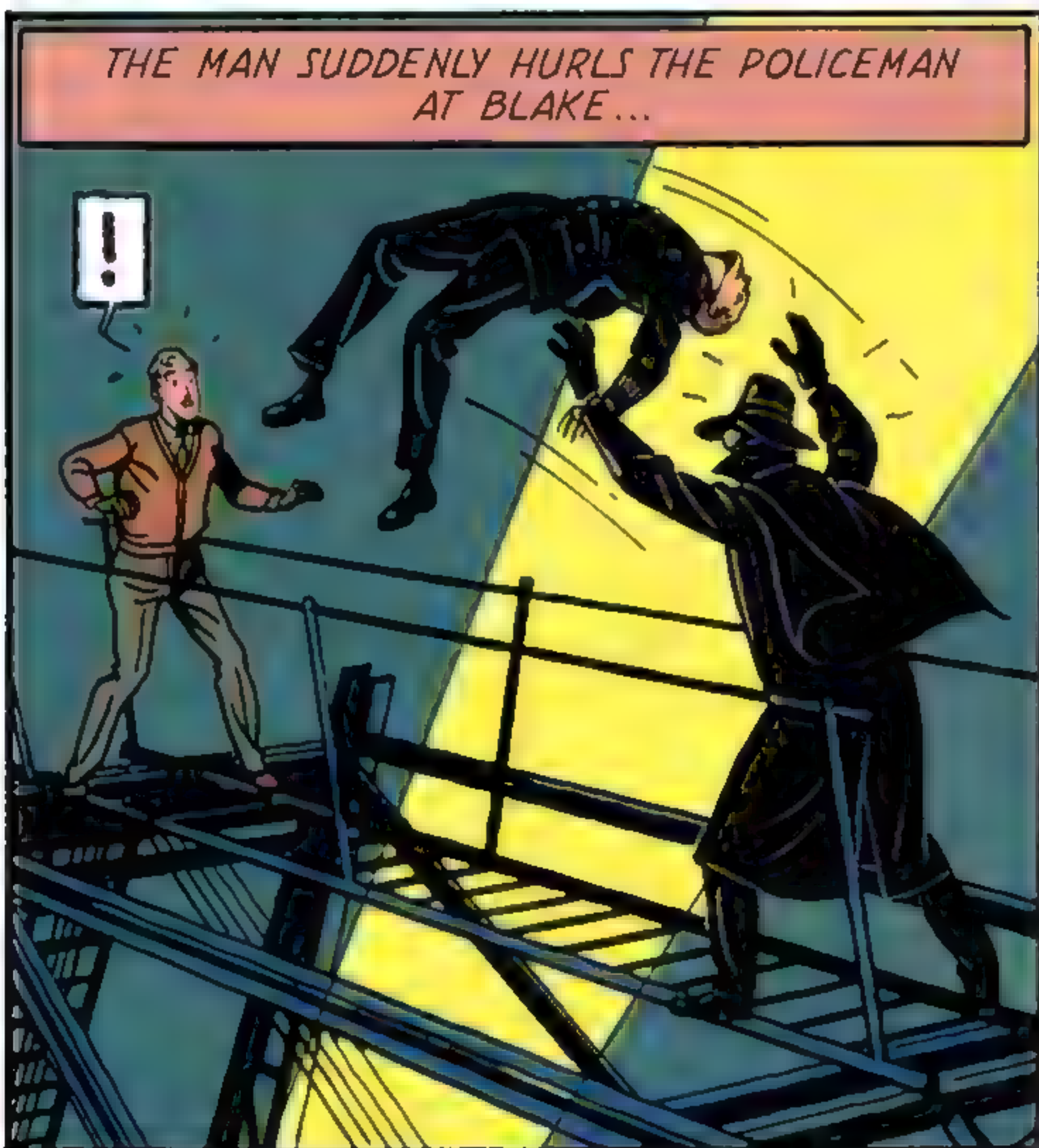
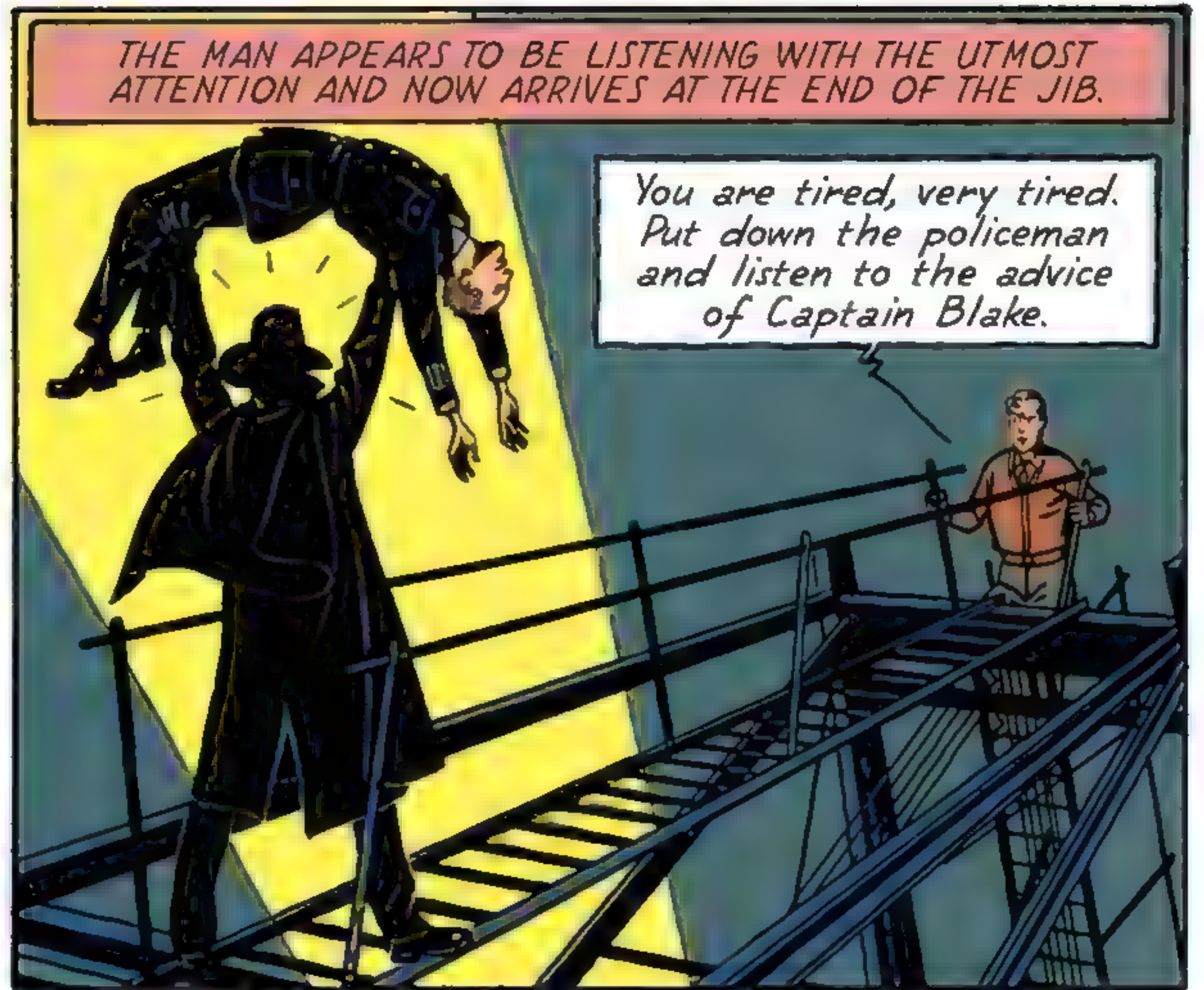
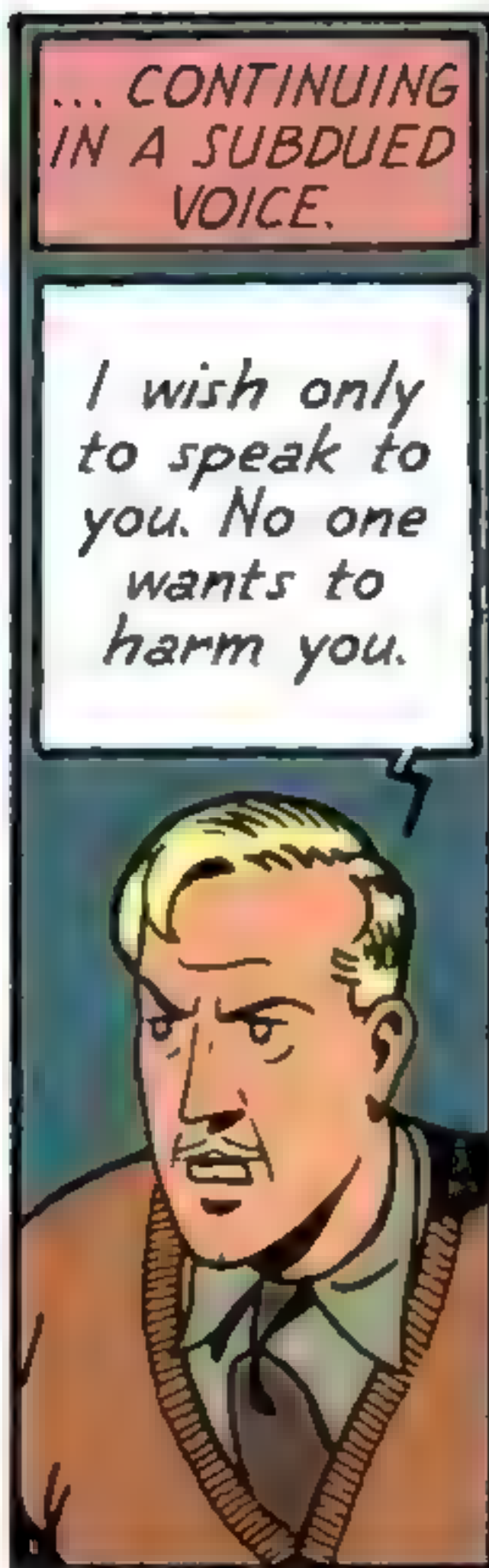
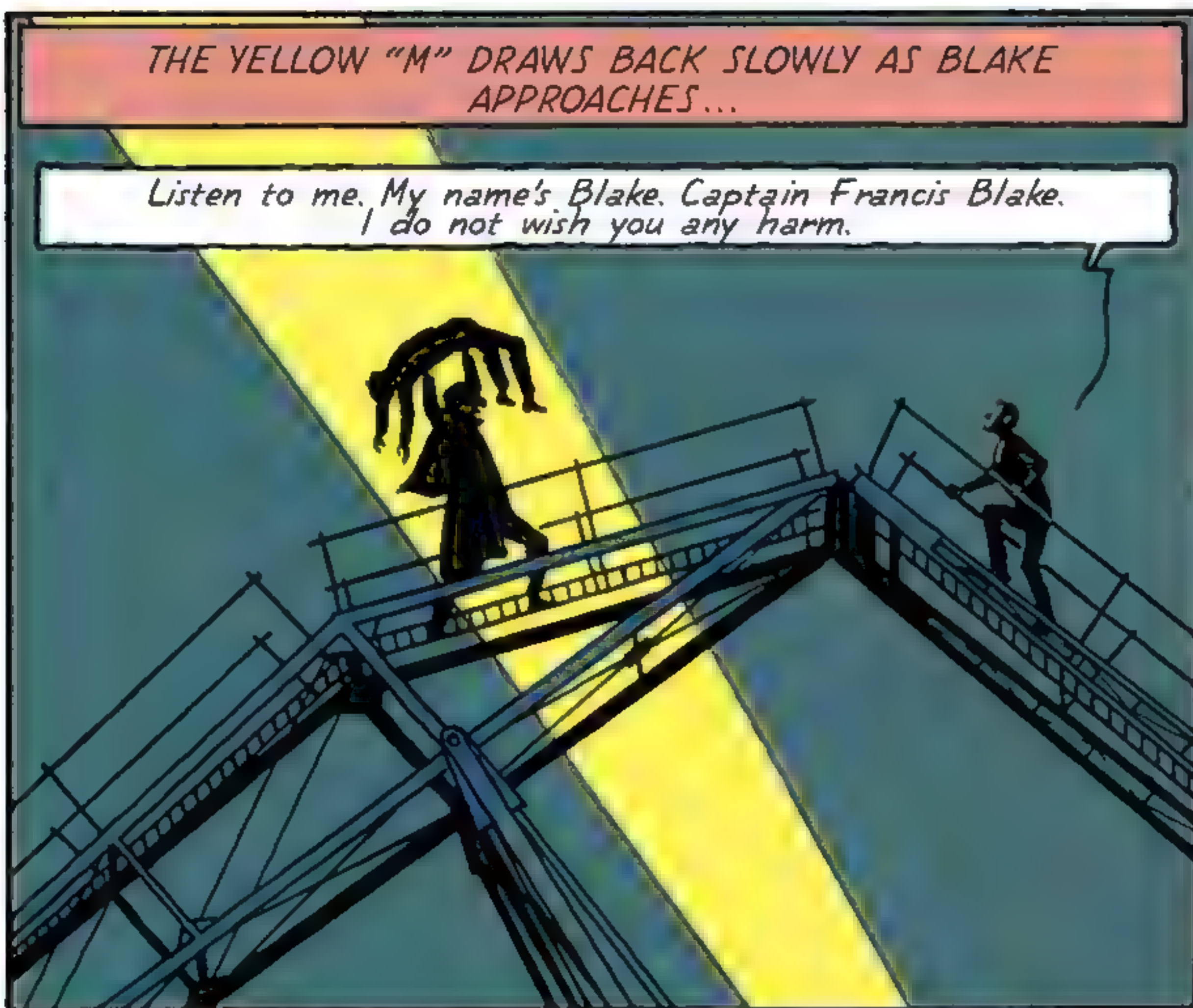
AND KENDALL, FOLLOWED BY HIS MEN, RUSHES TOWARD SHED NO. 7.







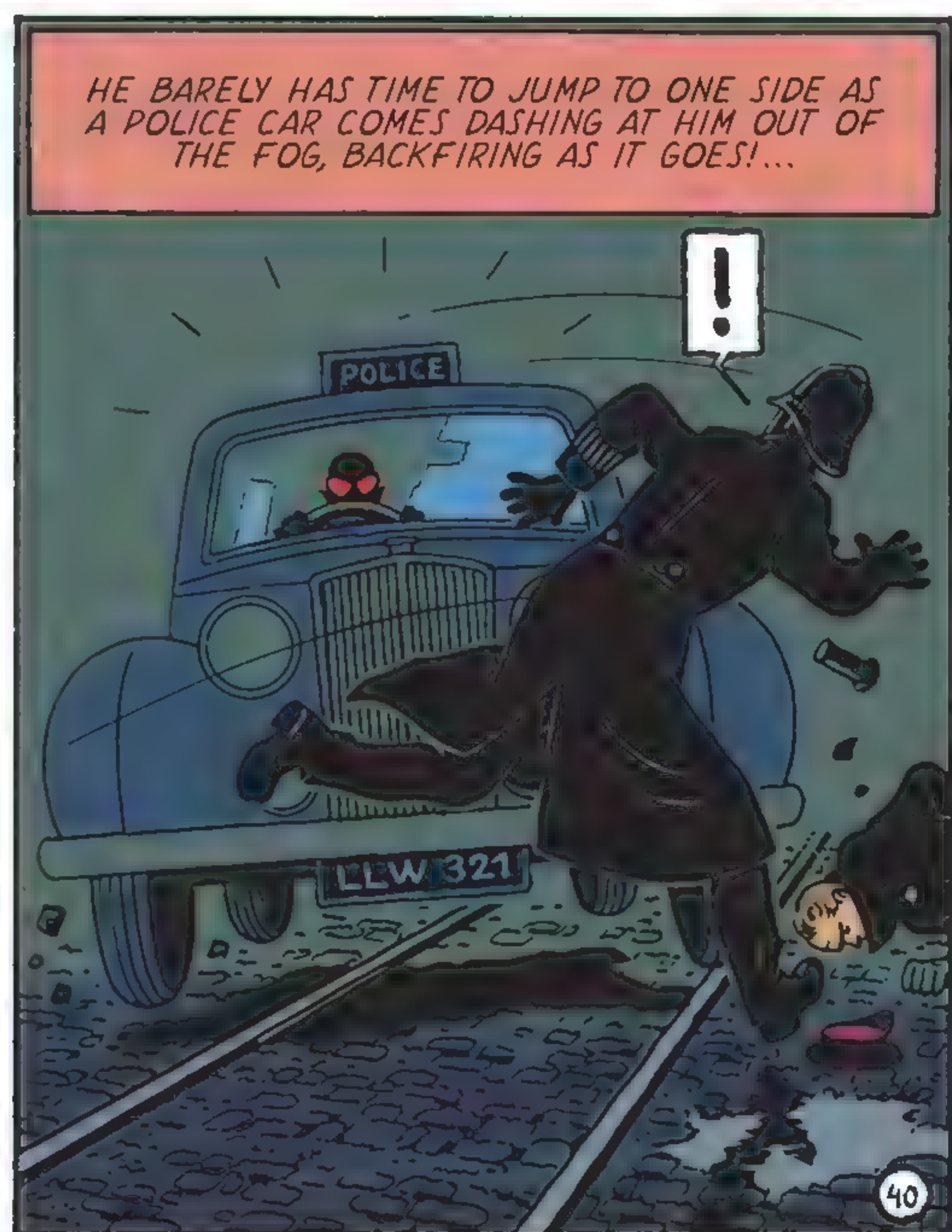


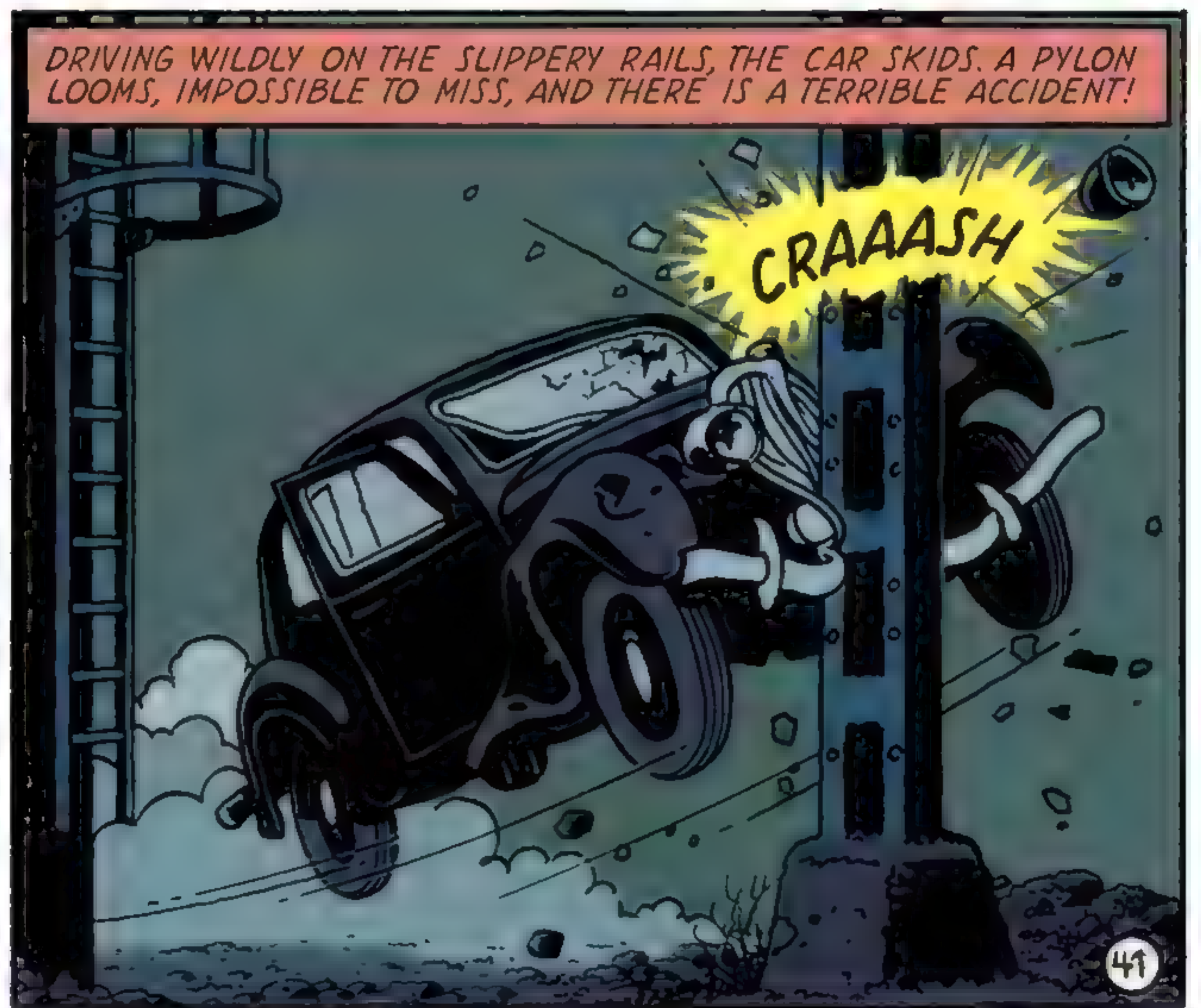
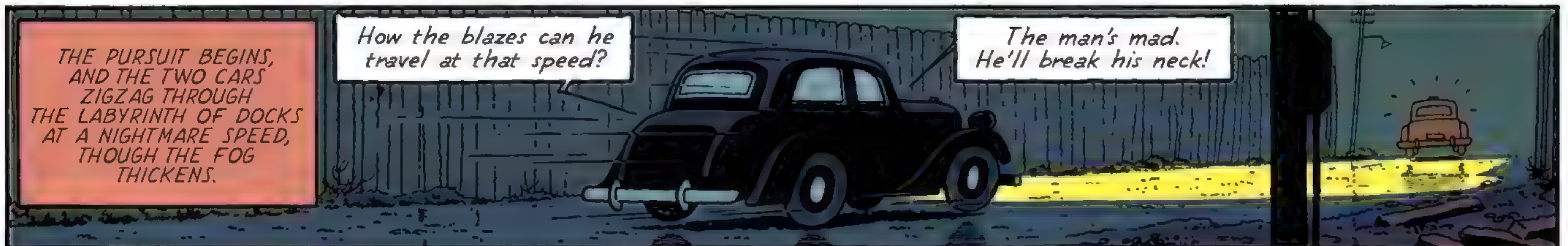
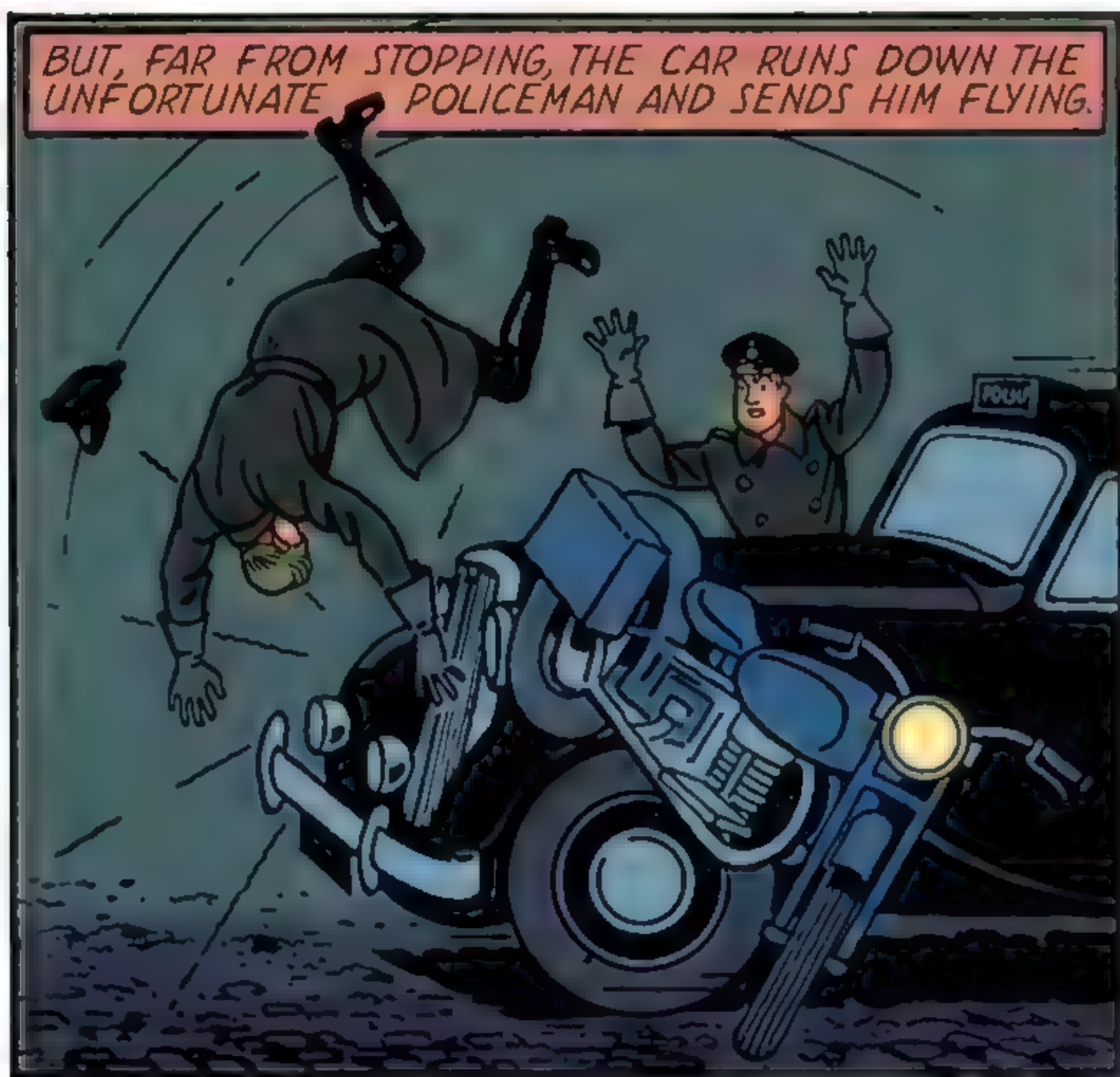
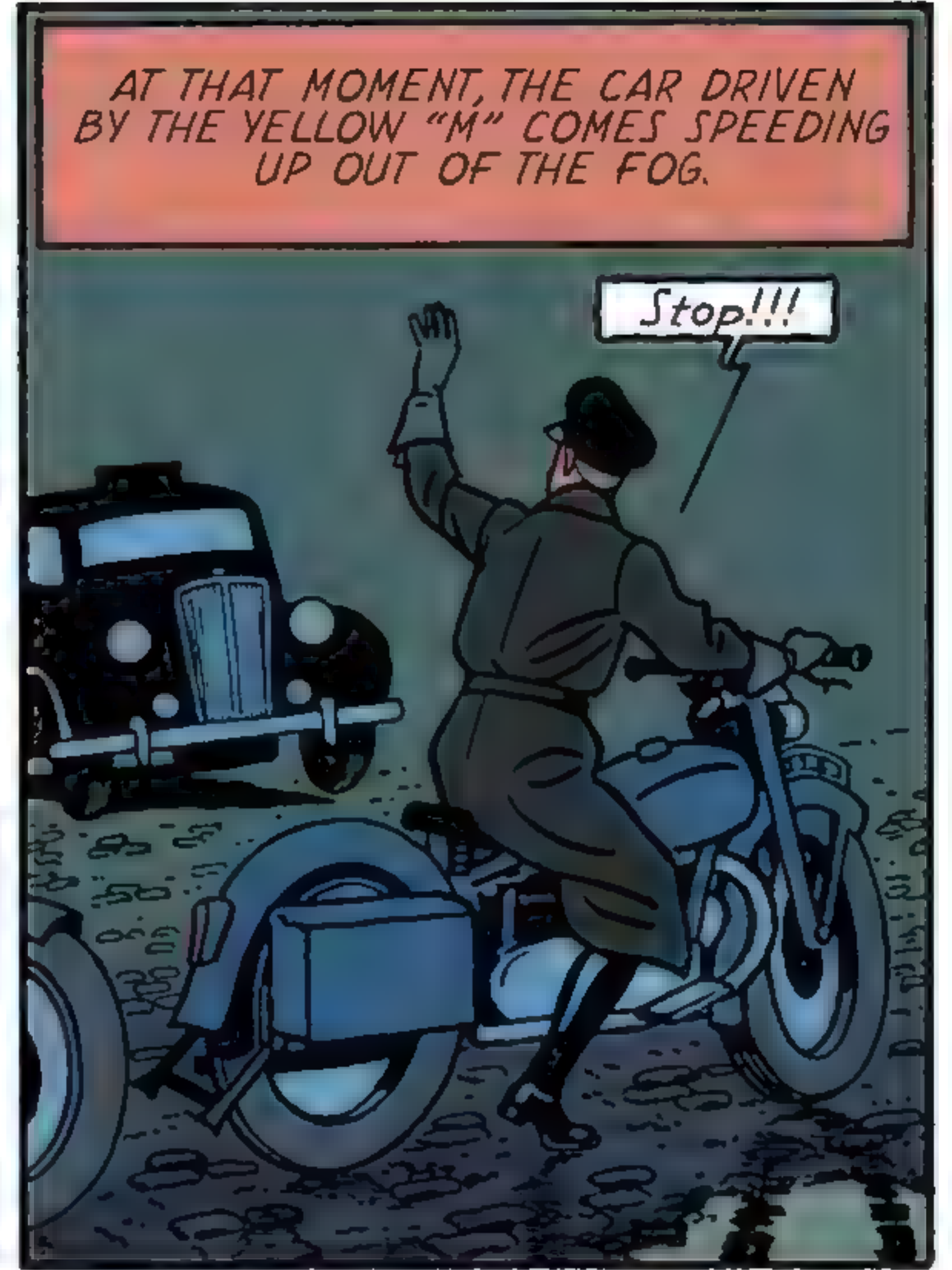
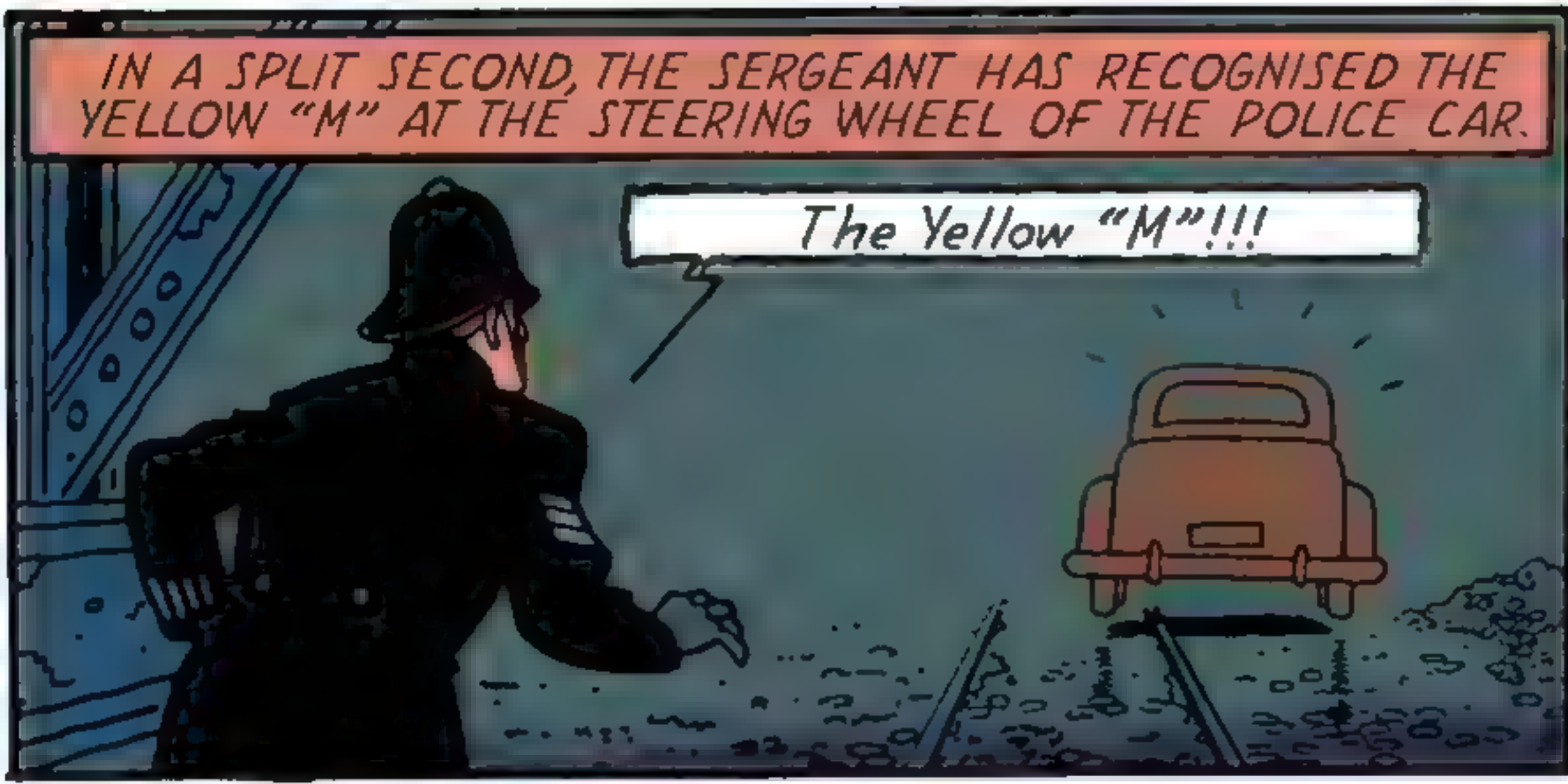


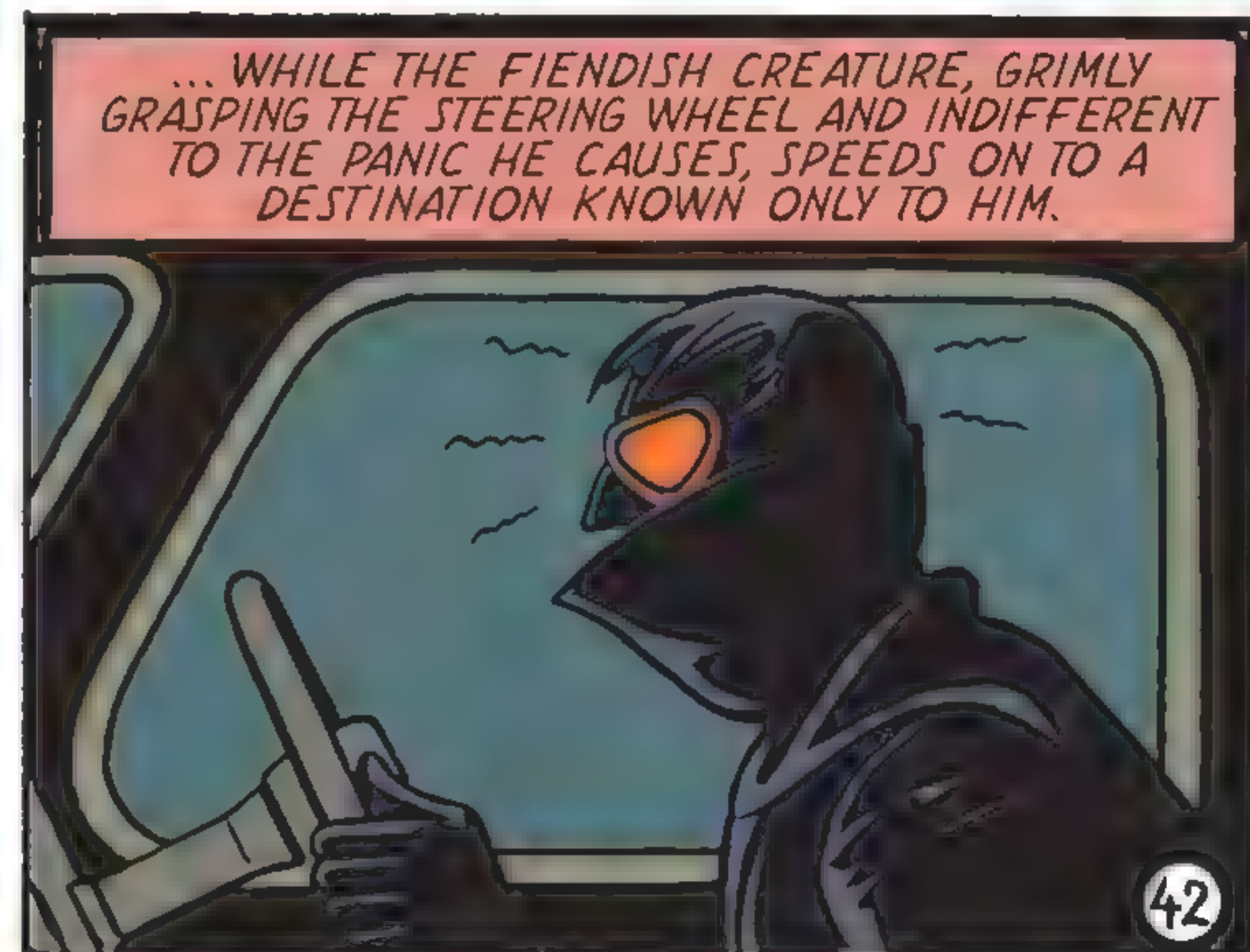
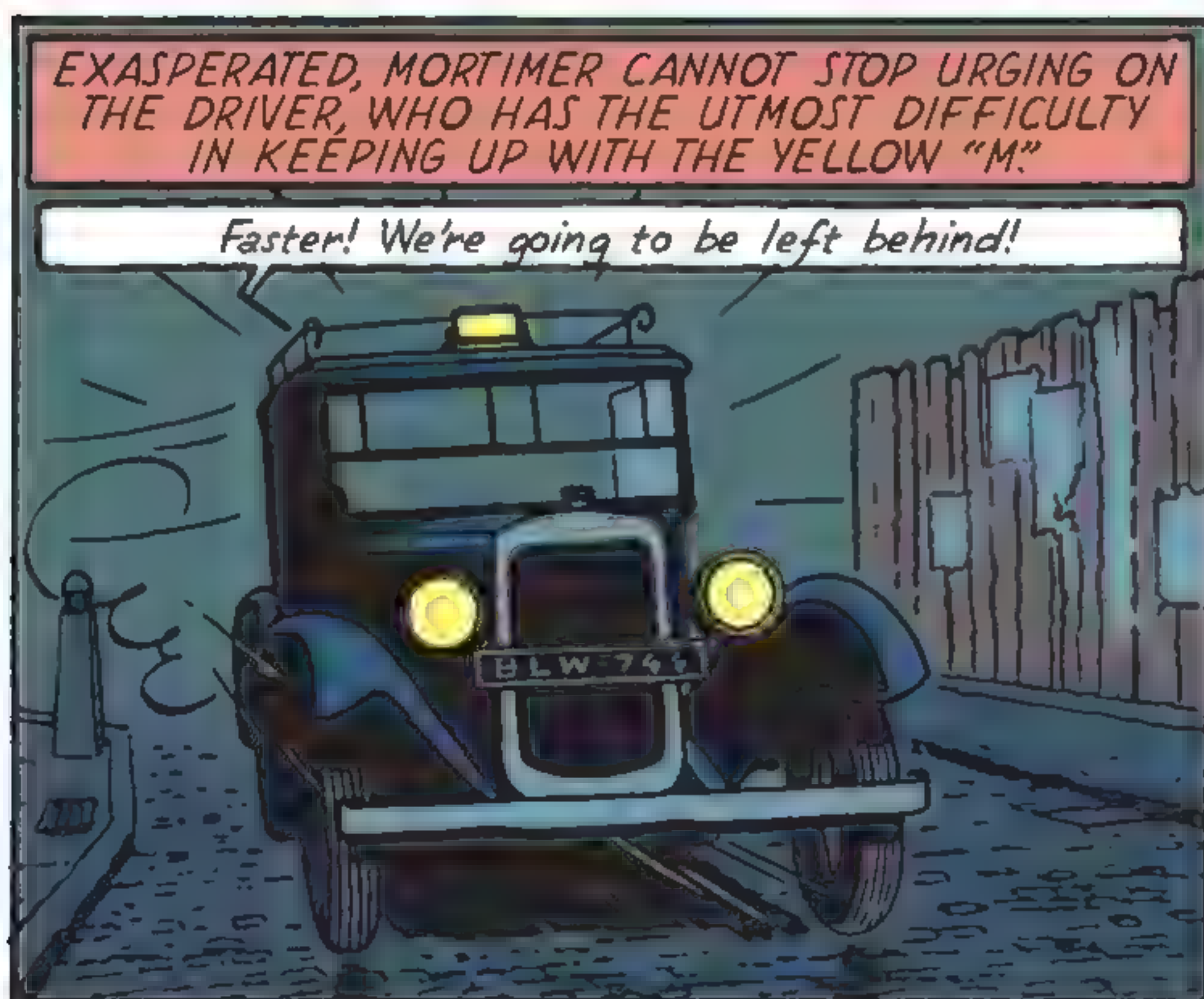
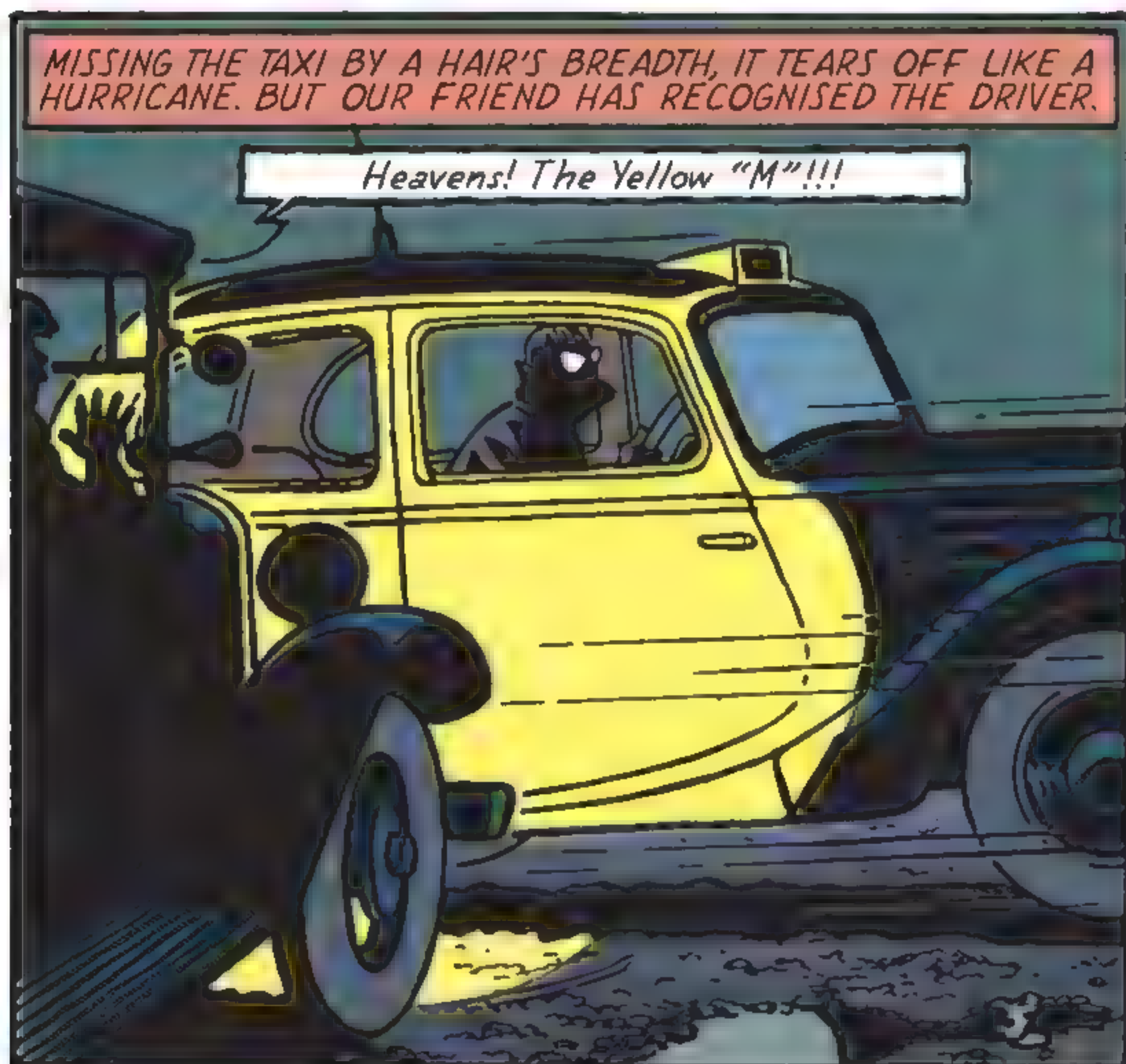
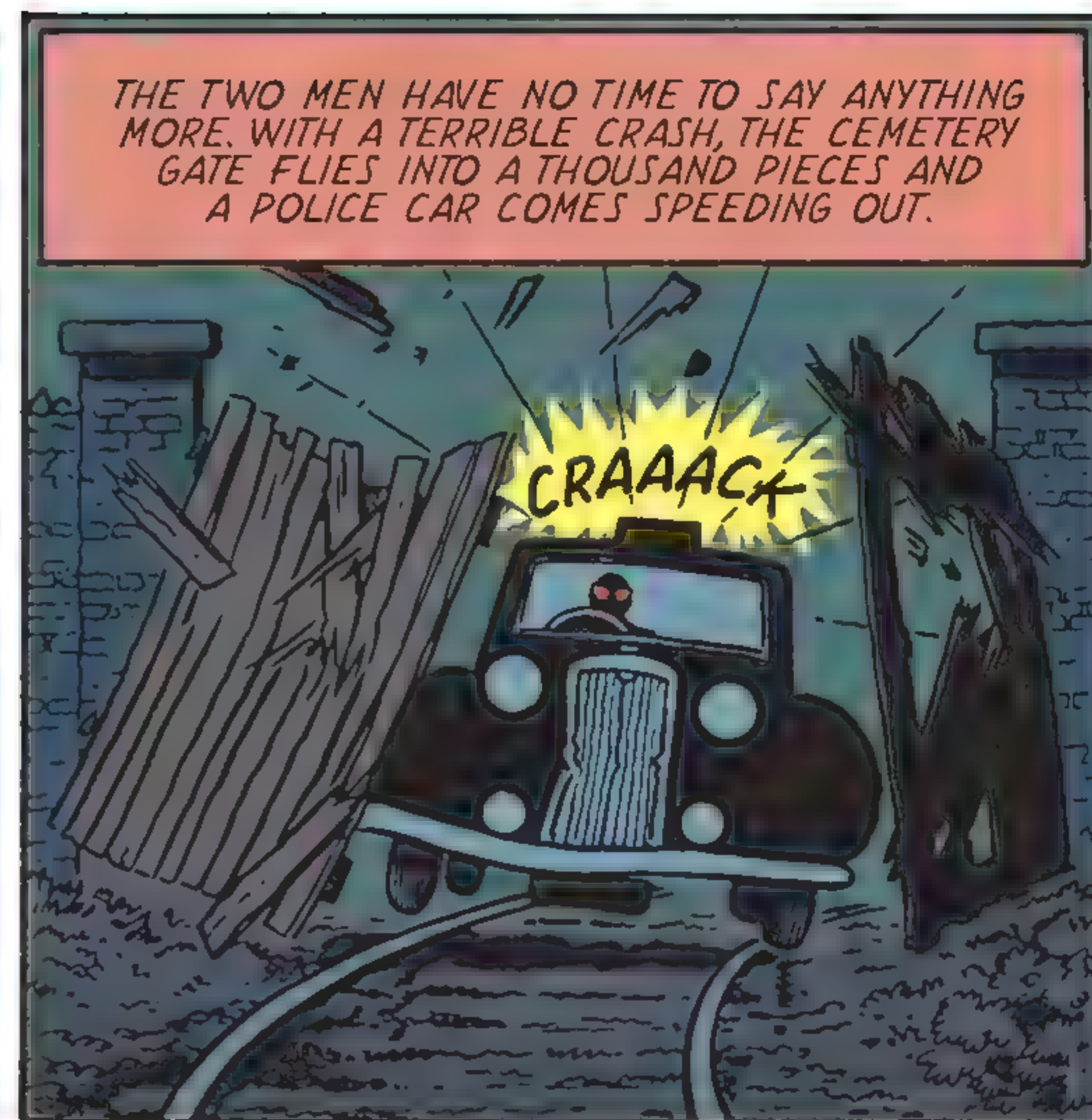
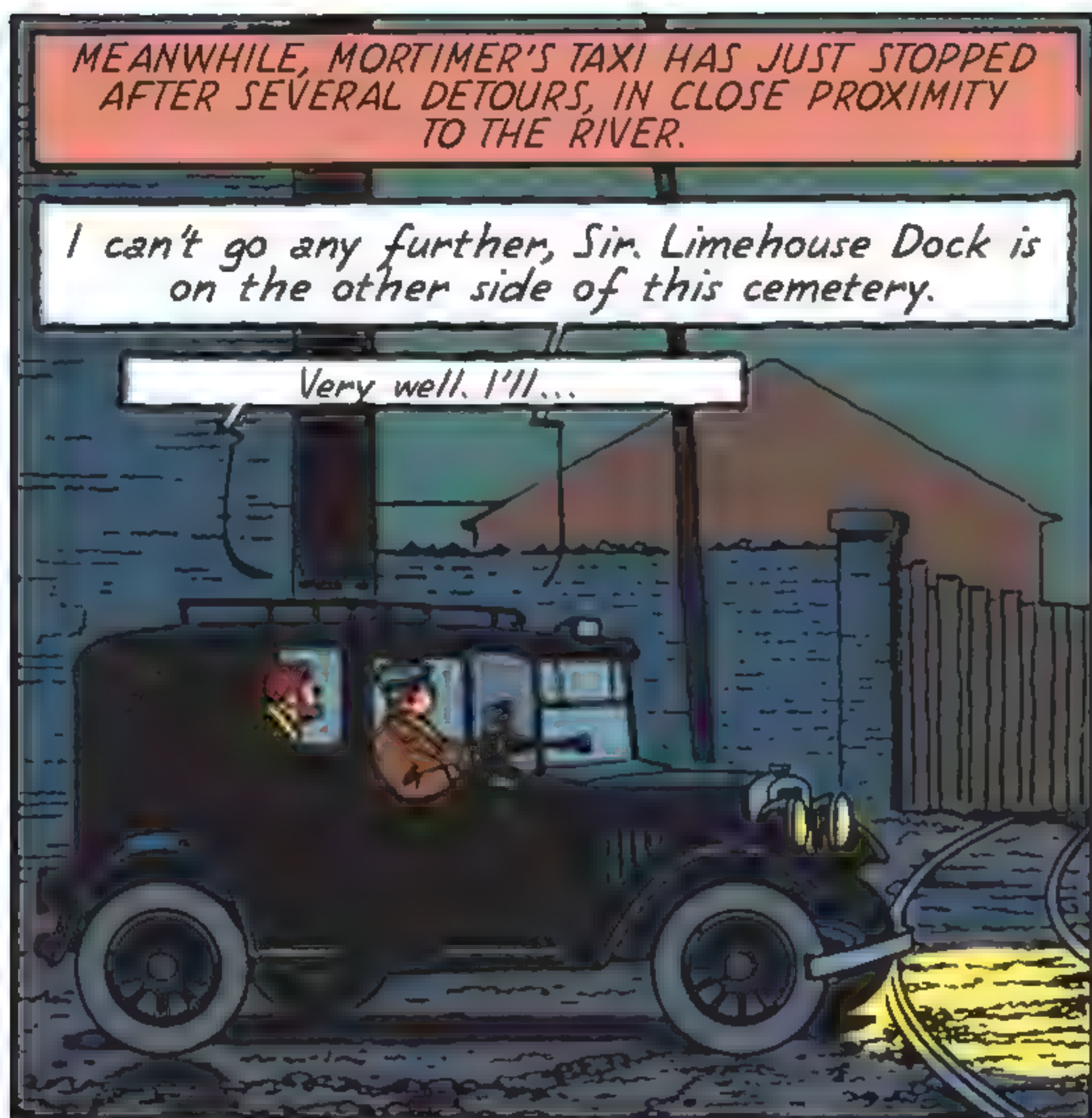
HALF AN HOUR LATER, AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF THE YELLOW "M'S" HAT, THE SEARCH HAS CONTINUED WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, BOTH ON THE DOCKSIDE AND IN THE RIVER, BUT TO NO AVAIL. THE MYSTERIOUS PERSONALITY SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED COMPLETELY IN THE THAMES. HOWEVER, BLAKE AND KENDALL REMAIN SCEPTICAL.



UNFORTUNATELY, MORTIMER'S TAXI DRIVER HAS TRIED TO TAKE A SHORTCUT AND GOTTEN COMPLETELY LOST IN THE FOG. HE HAS BEEN WANDERING AROUND IN THE DOCK AREA FOR HALF AN HOUR.



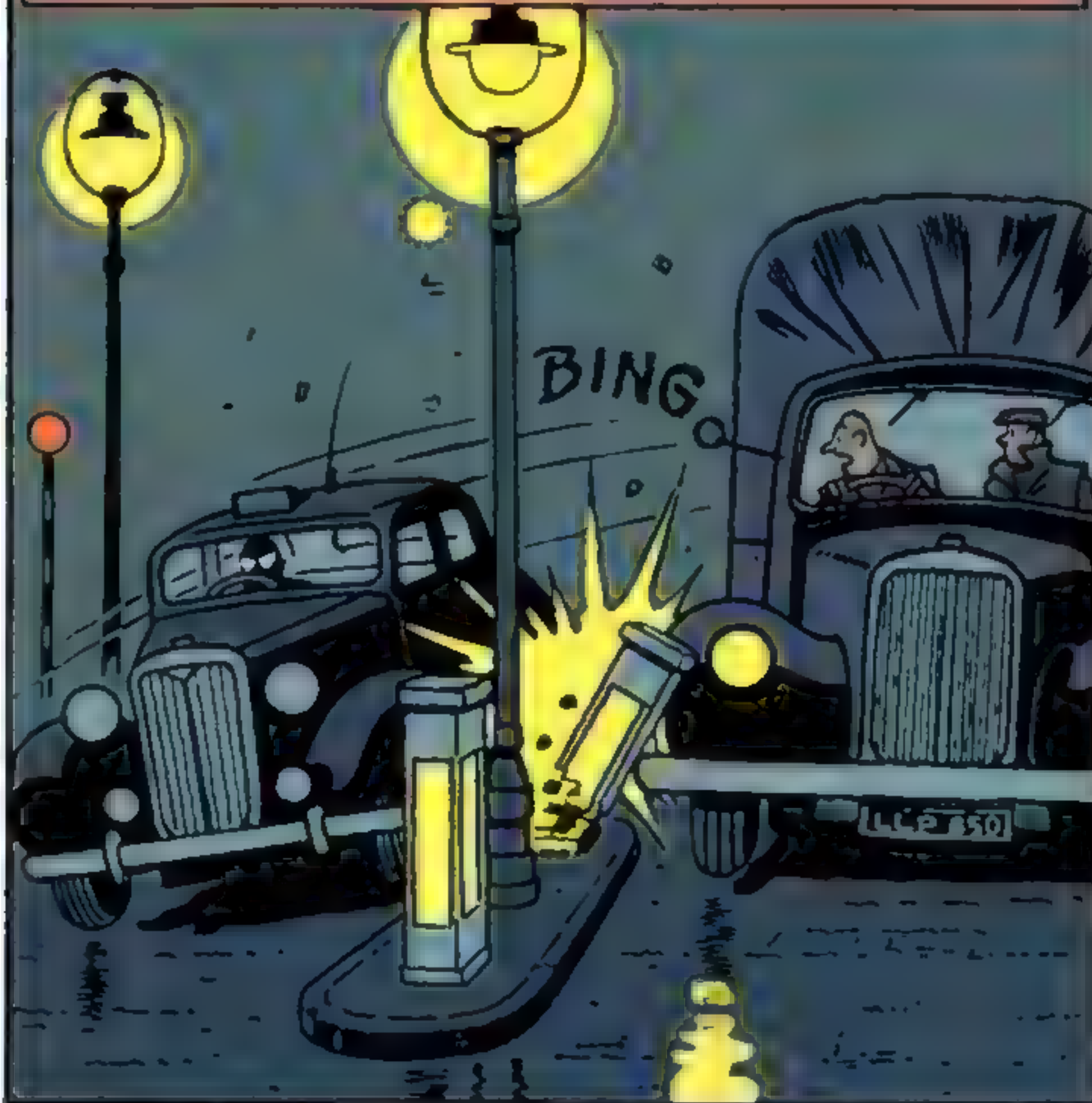




ALTHOUGH THE FUGITIVE SPEEDS MORE AND MORE WILDLY THROUGH THE DENSE TRAFFIC, MORTIMER'S TAXI PASSES CLOSE BEHIND...



HOWEVER, AS THE YELLOW "M" HAS JUST OVERTAKEN A LORRY ON A CURVE, HE CANNOT AVOID A TRAFFIC ISLAND AND MOWS DOWN A BOLLARD!



THE IMPACT SENDS THE CAR HURLING INTO THE OTHER CARRIAGEWAY. IT ZIGZAGS FOR A MOMENT AMONG CARS TRAVELING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. SUDDENLY, THE DRIVER FACES THE MENACING MASS OF A BUS!

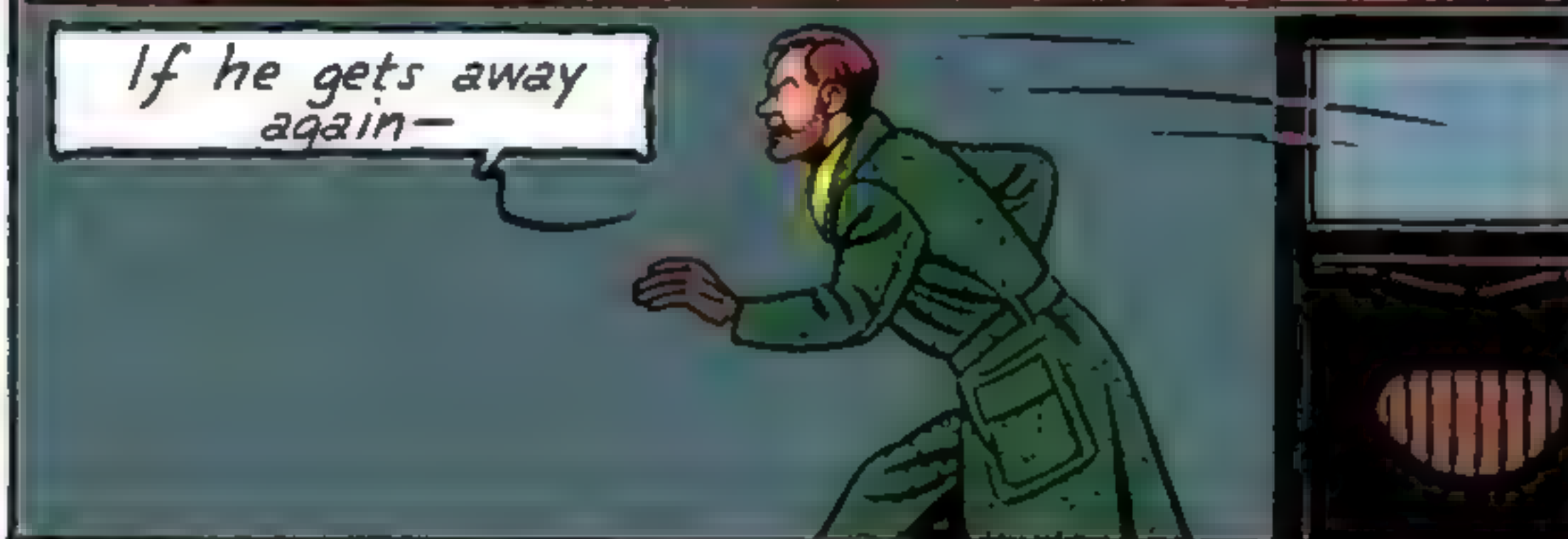


A HEAD-ON COLLISION IS UNAVOIDABLE. THERE IS A GREAT CRASH OF BREAKING GLASS!

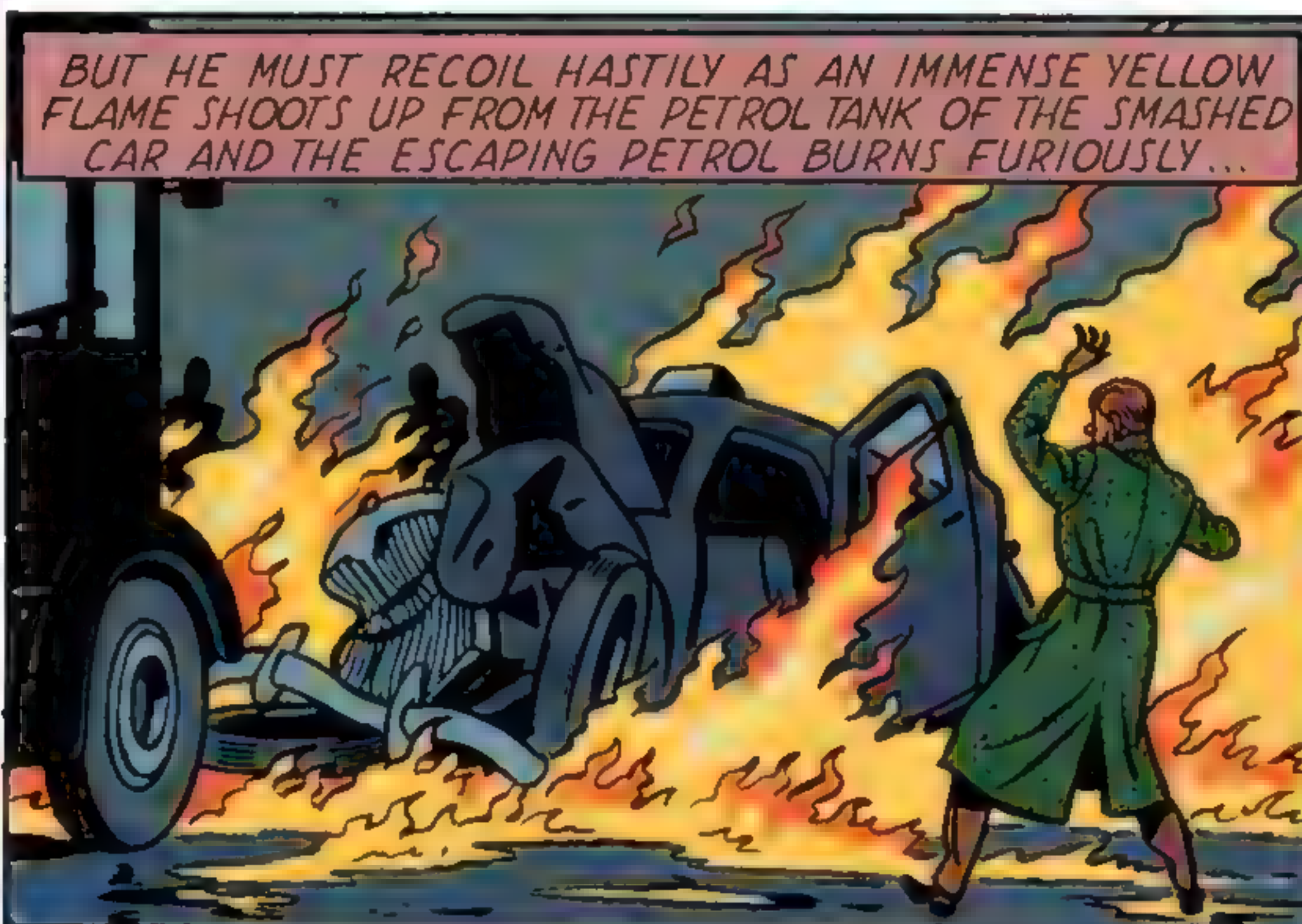


MORTIMER IS OUT OF THE TAXI LIKE A SHOT...

If he gets away again—



BUT HE MUST RECOIL HASTILY AS AN IMMENSE YELLOW FLAME SHOTS UP FROM THE PETROL TANK OF THE SMASHED CAR AND THE ESCAPING PETROL BURNS FURIOUSLY...



... WHILE AT THE SAME INSTANT, A HUMAN FORM BURNING LIKE A TORCH EMERGES FROM THE FLAMES!



IMMEDIATELY A SQUALL ARISES WITH A FEARFUL HISS, ENVELOPING THE ACCIDENT LOCATION IN A VIOLENT, INEXPLICABLE WHIRLWIND...



THE FLAMES ARE INSTANTLY EXTINGUISHED, AS IF SMOTHERED BY SOME SUPERNATURAL FORCE!

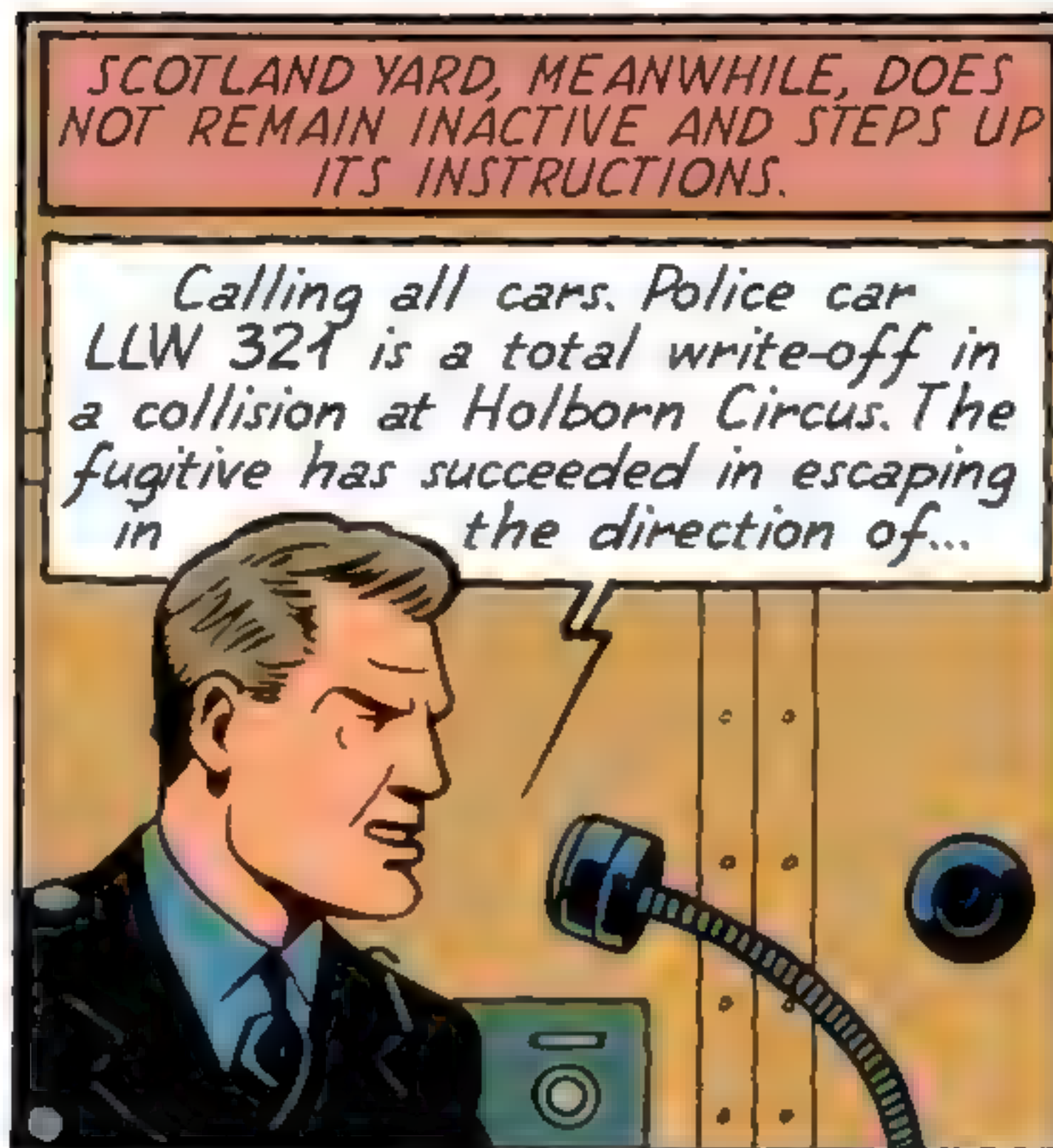
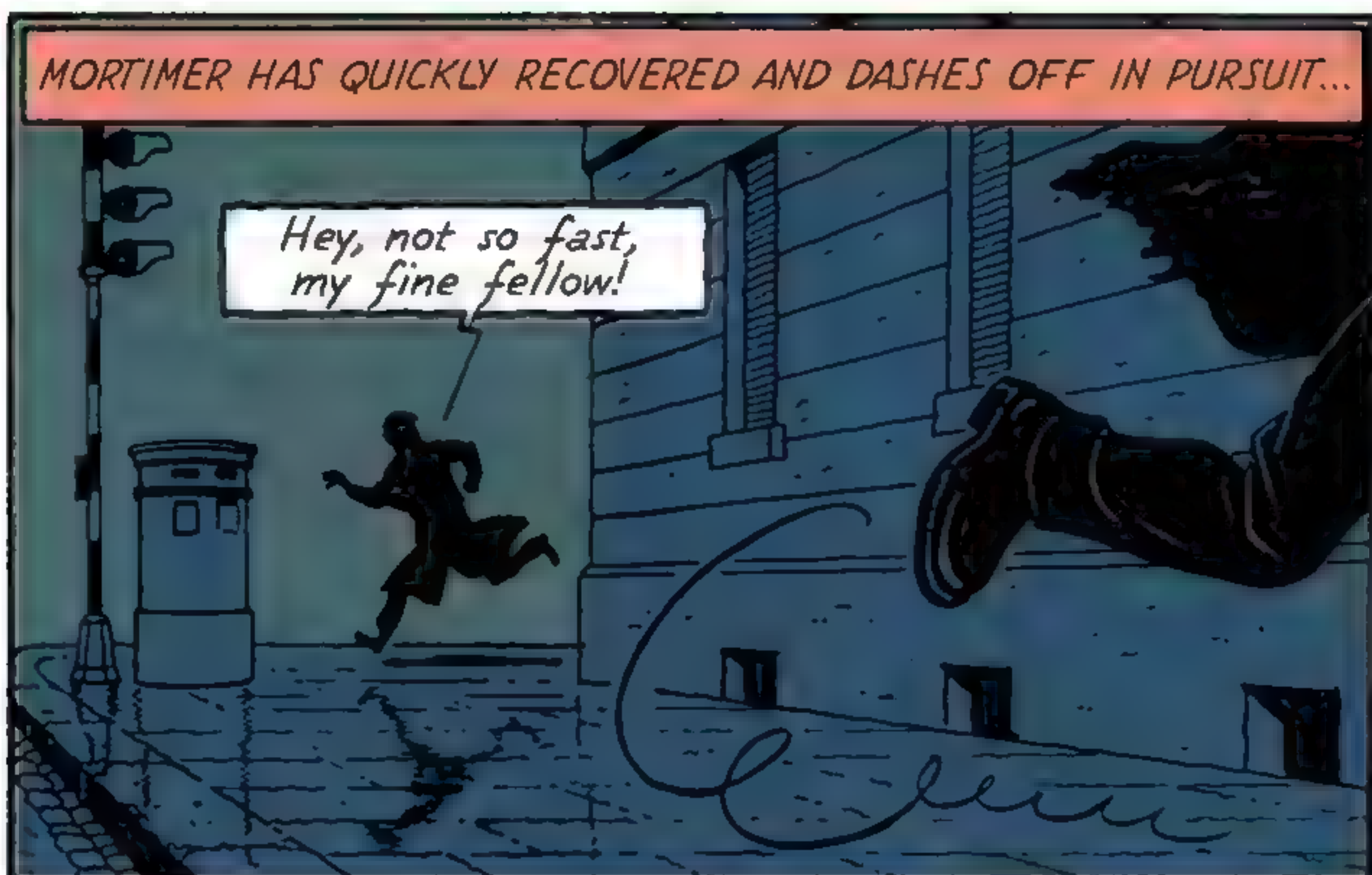


THIS STRANGE PHENOMENON HAS RIVETED THE AMAZED SPECTATORS TO THE GROUND...

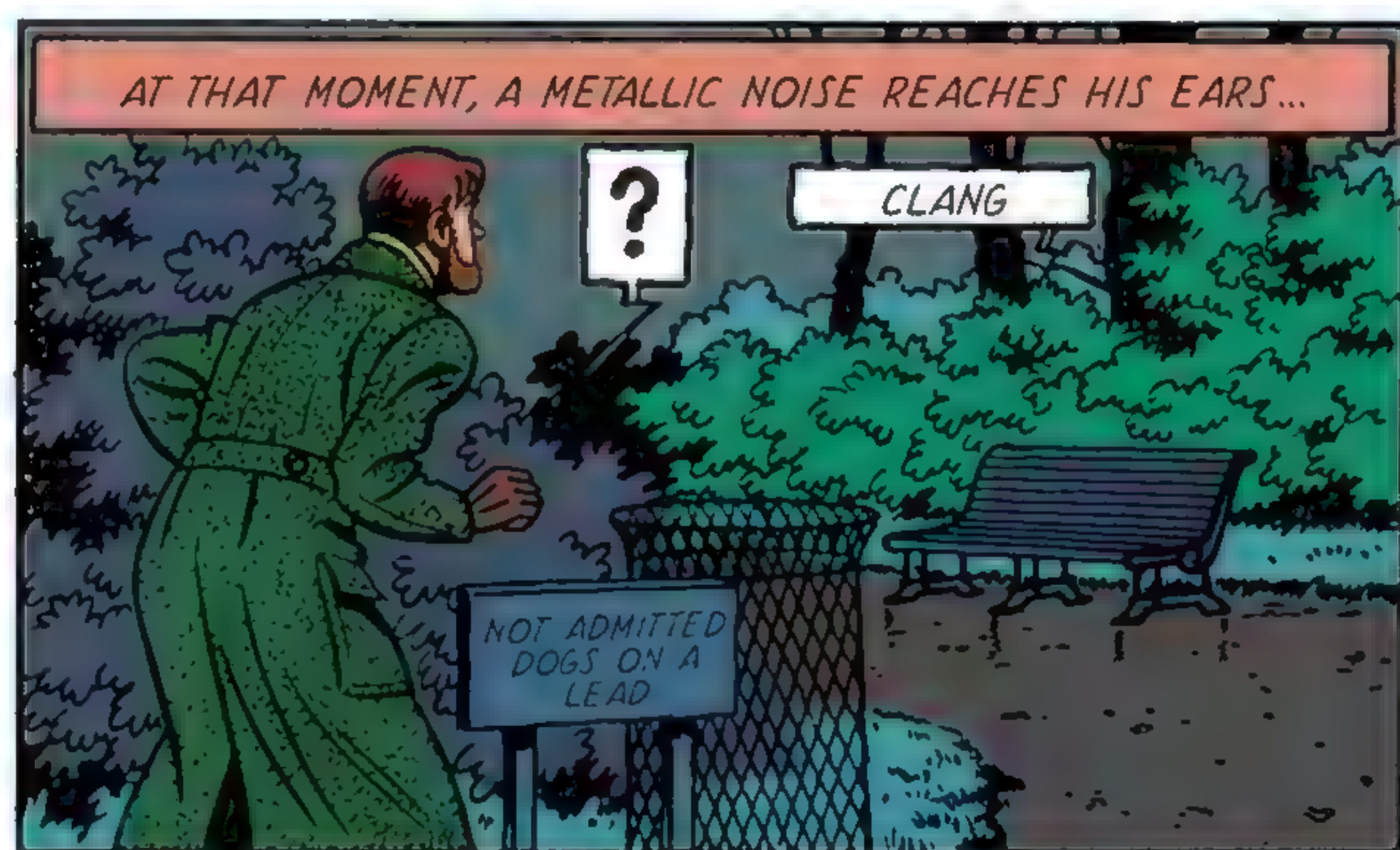
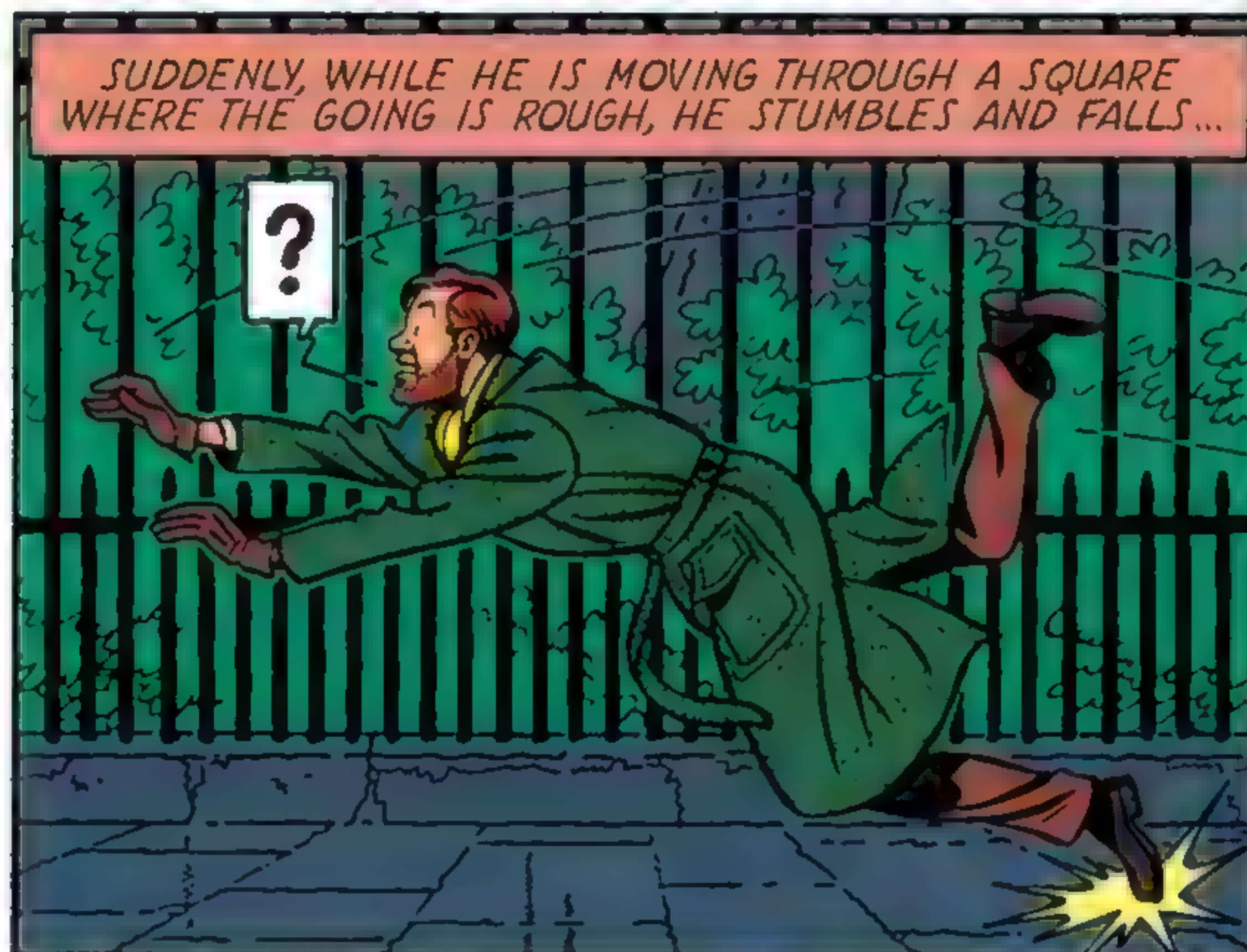


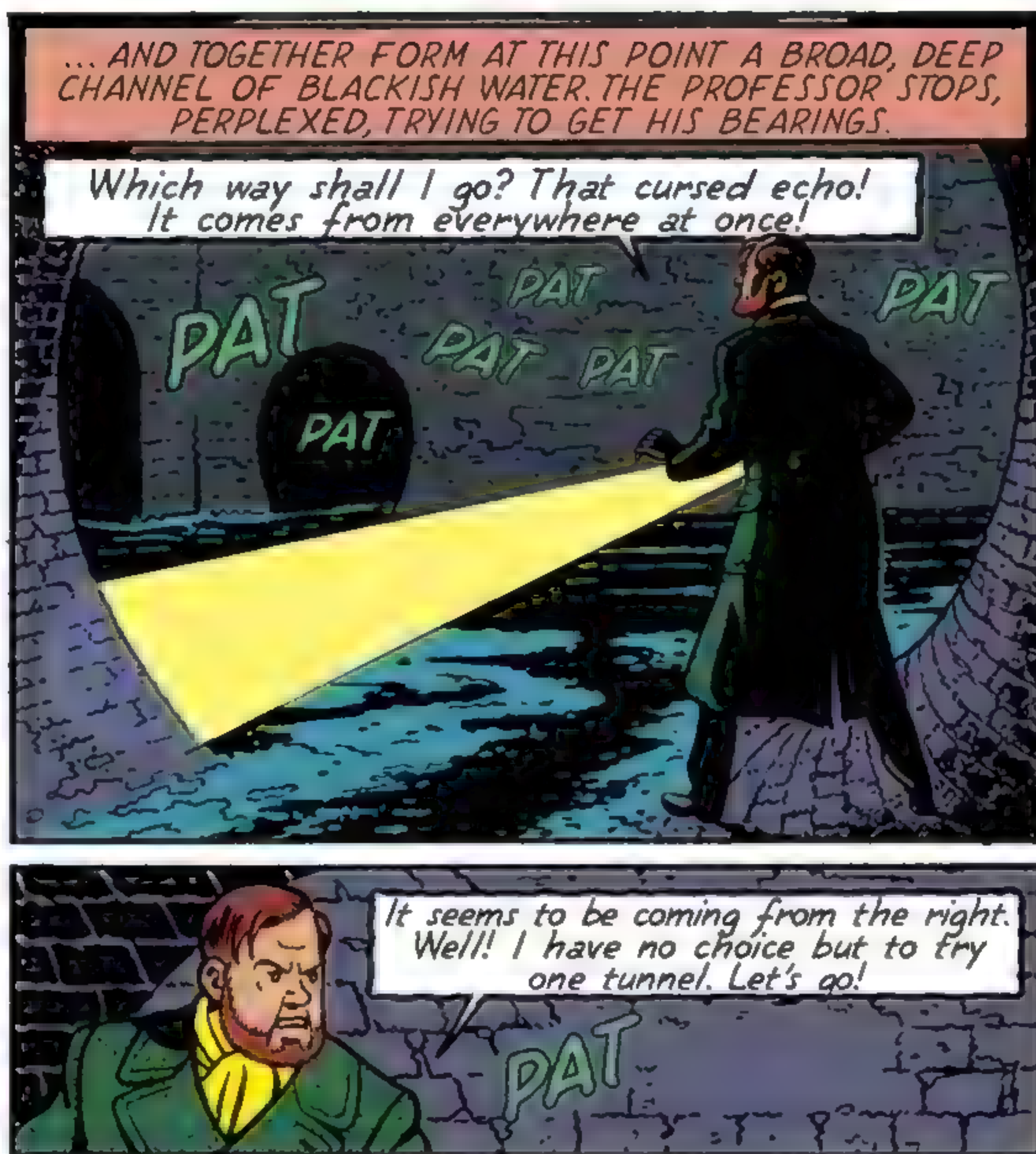
... AND THE YELLOW "M" TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THIS TO PLUNGE INTO A NEARBY STREET AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE FOG.

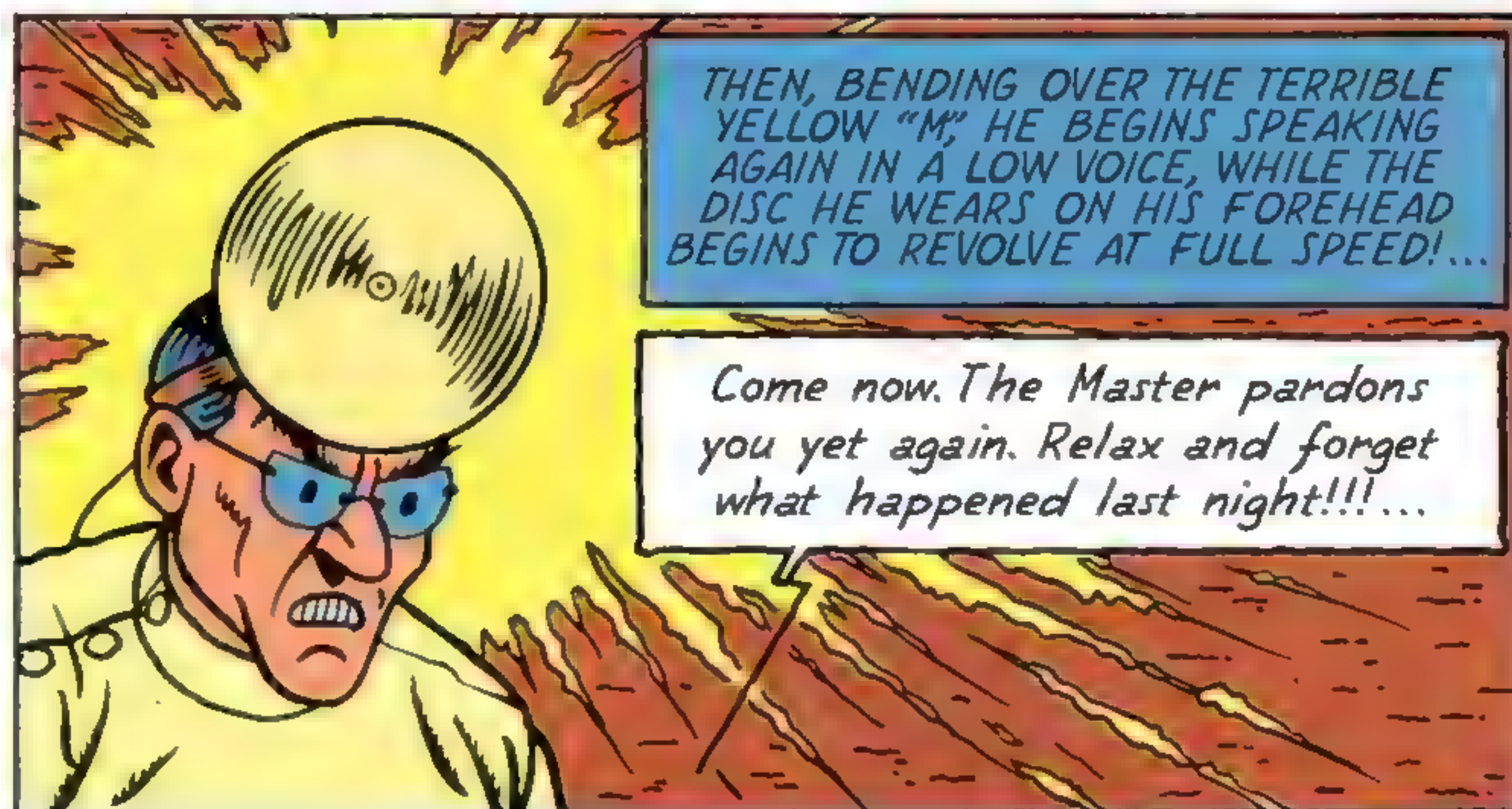
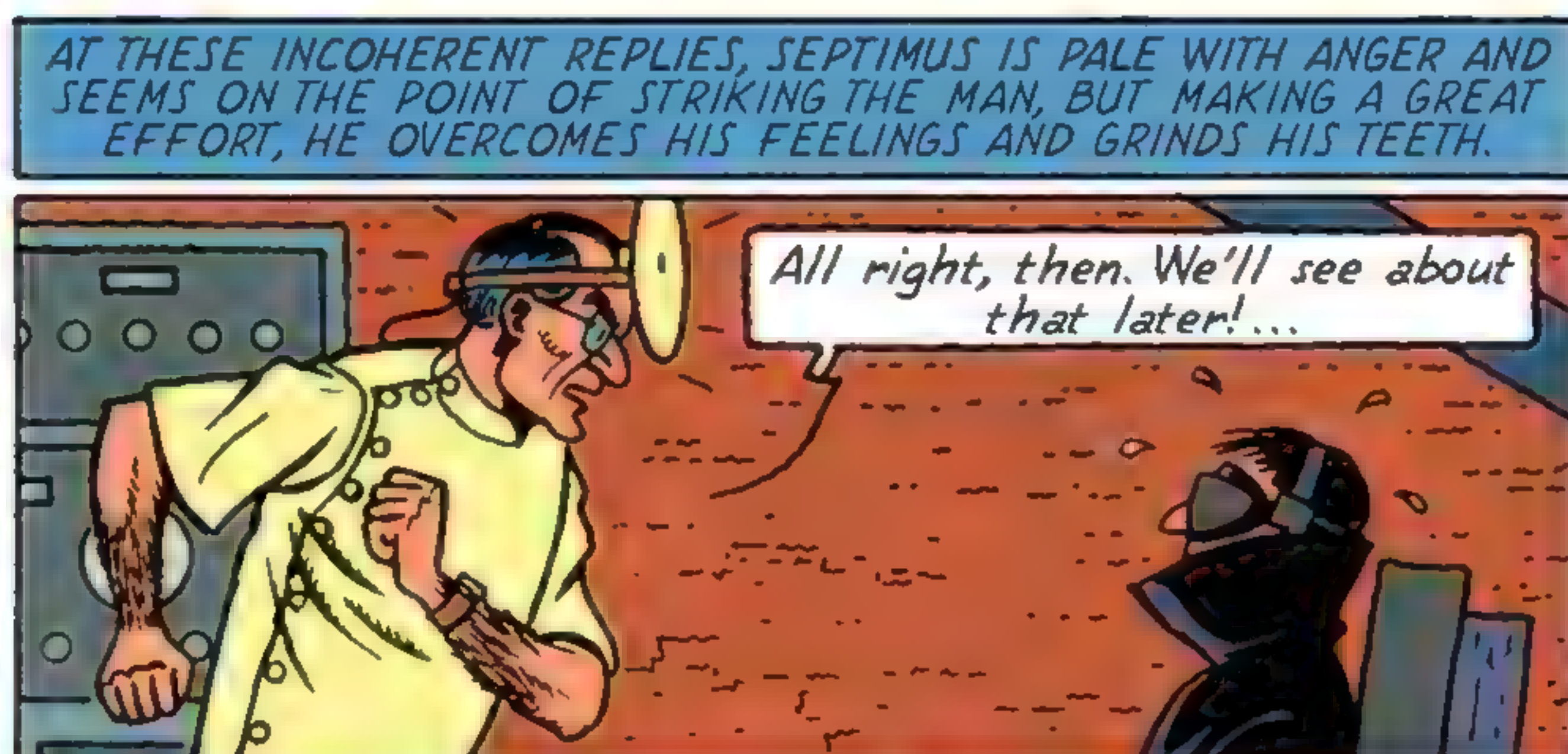
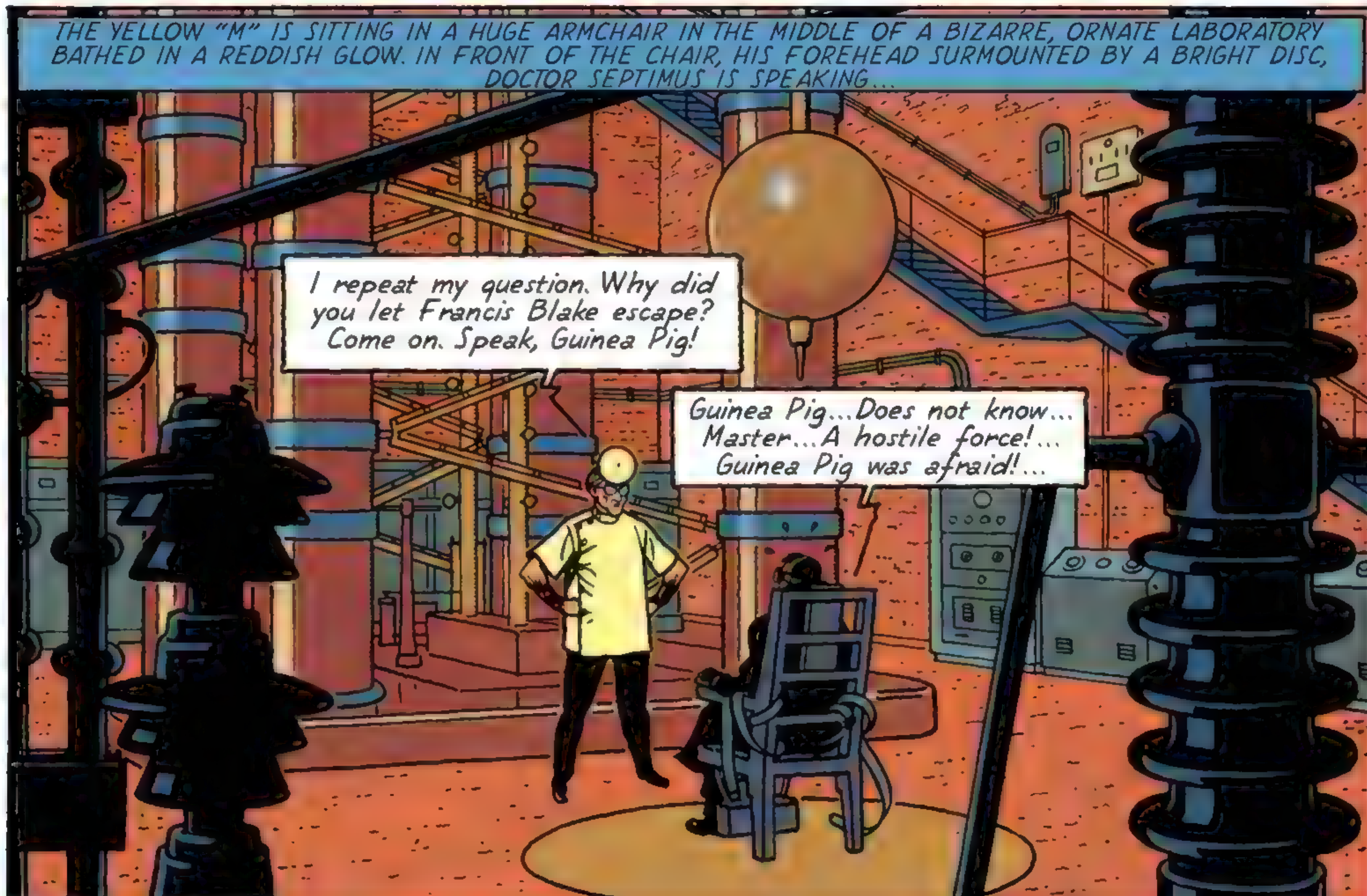
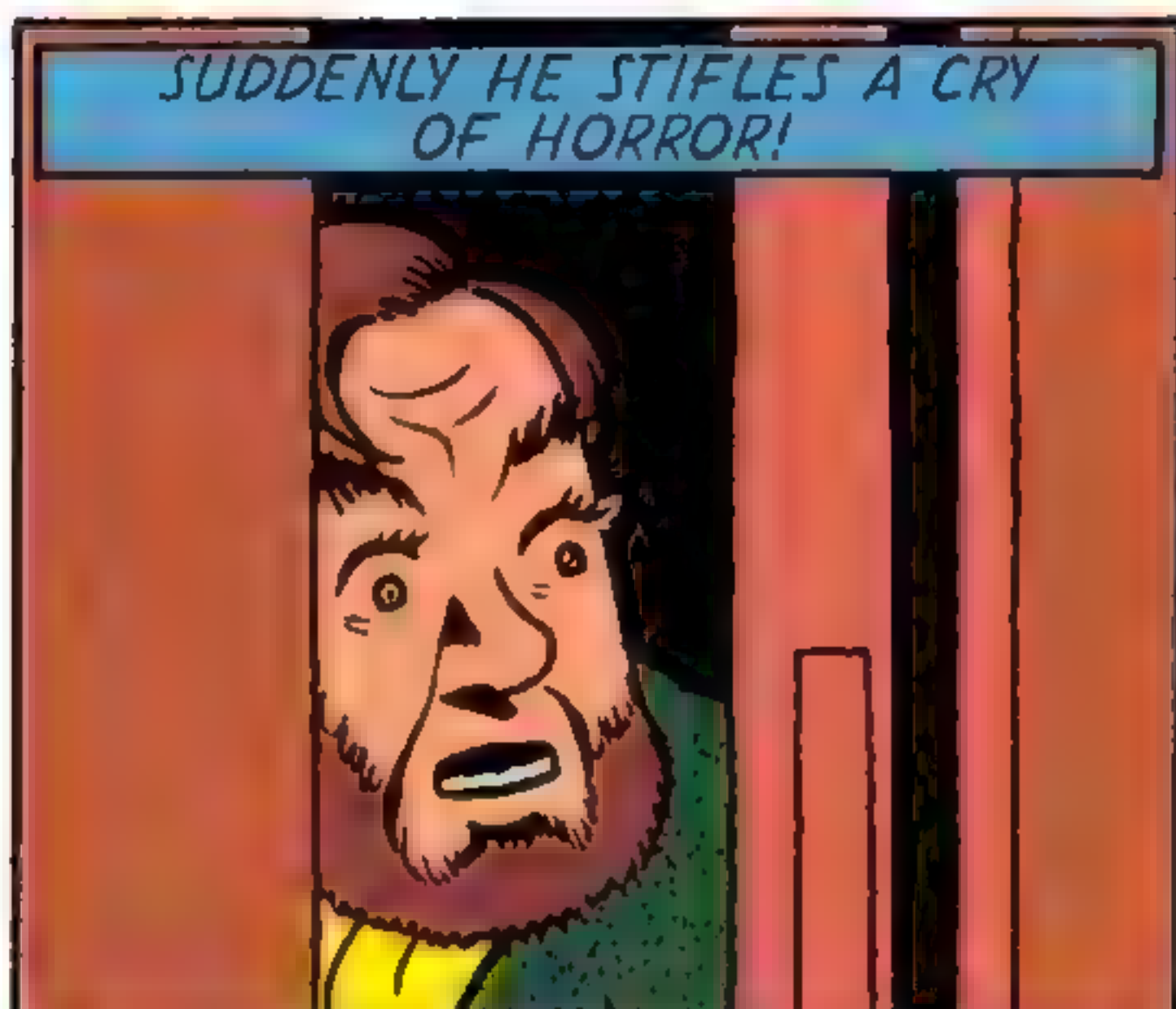
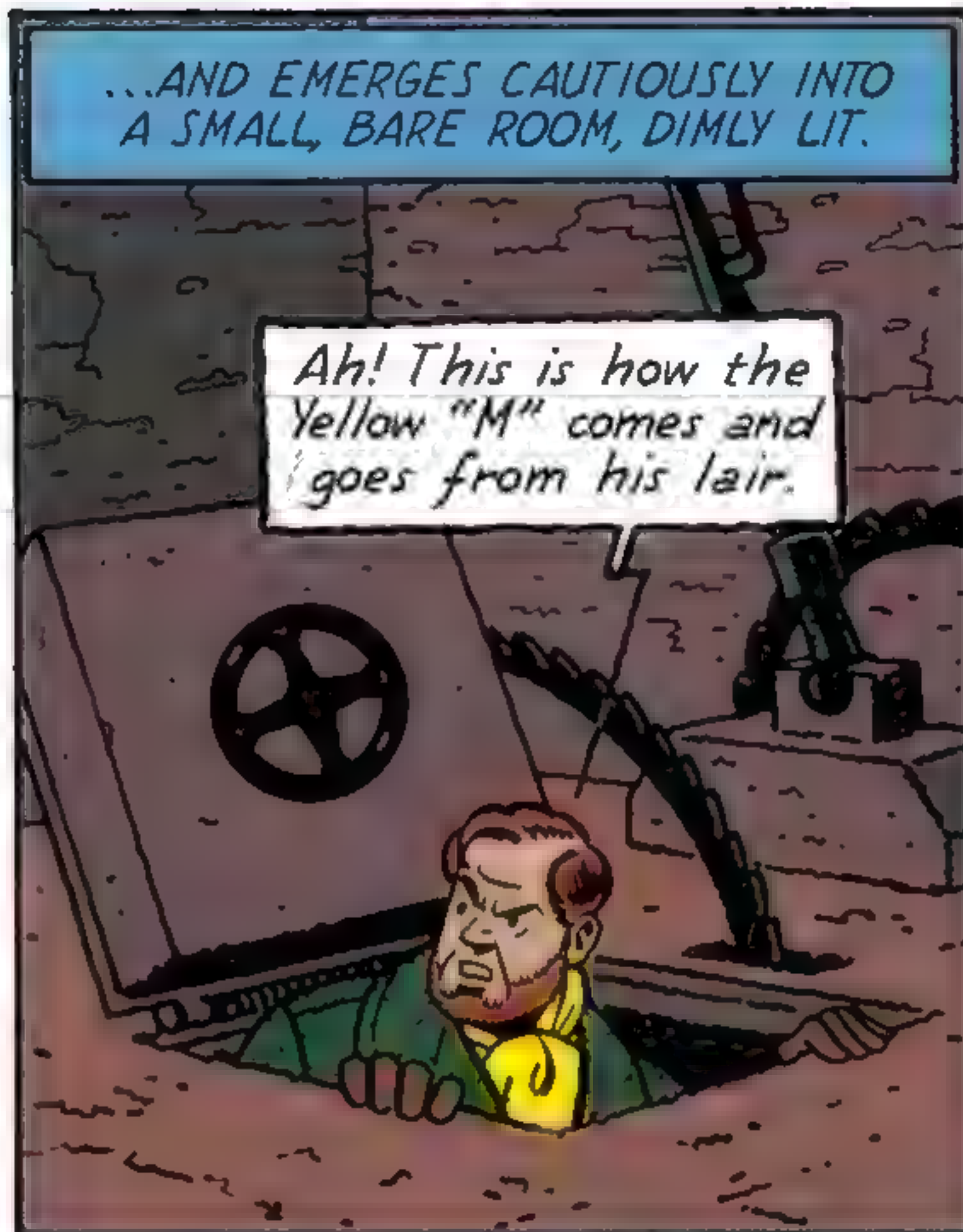


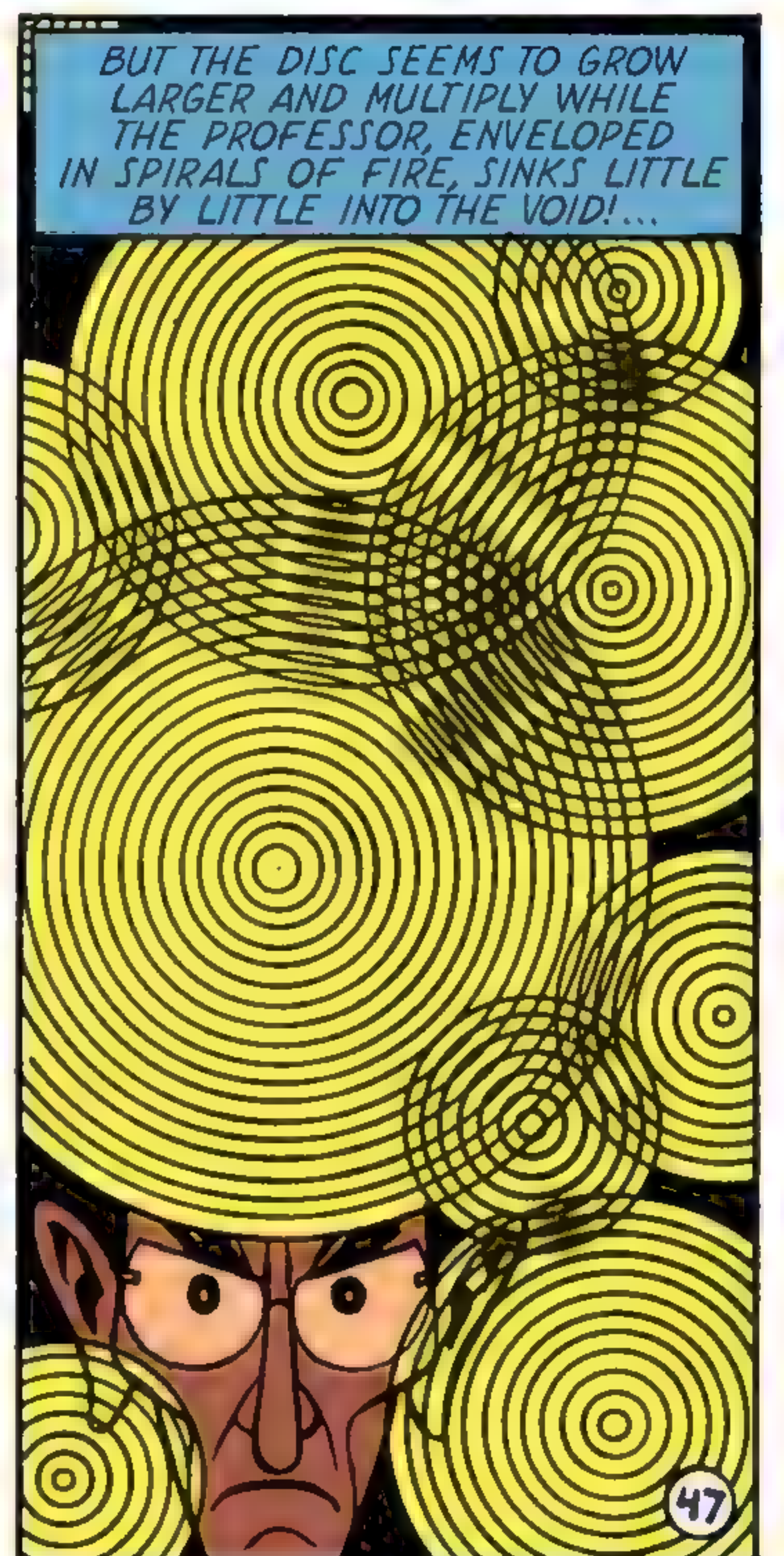
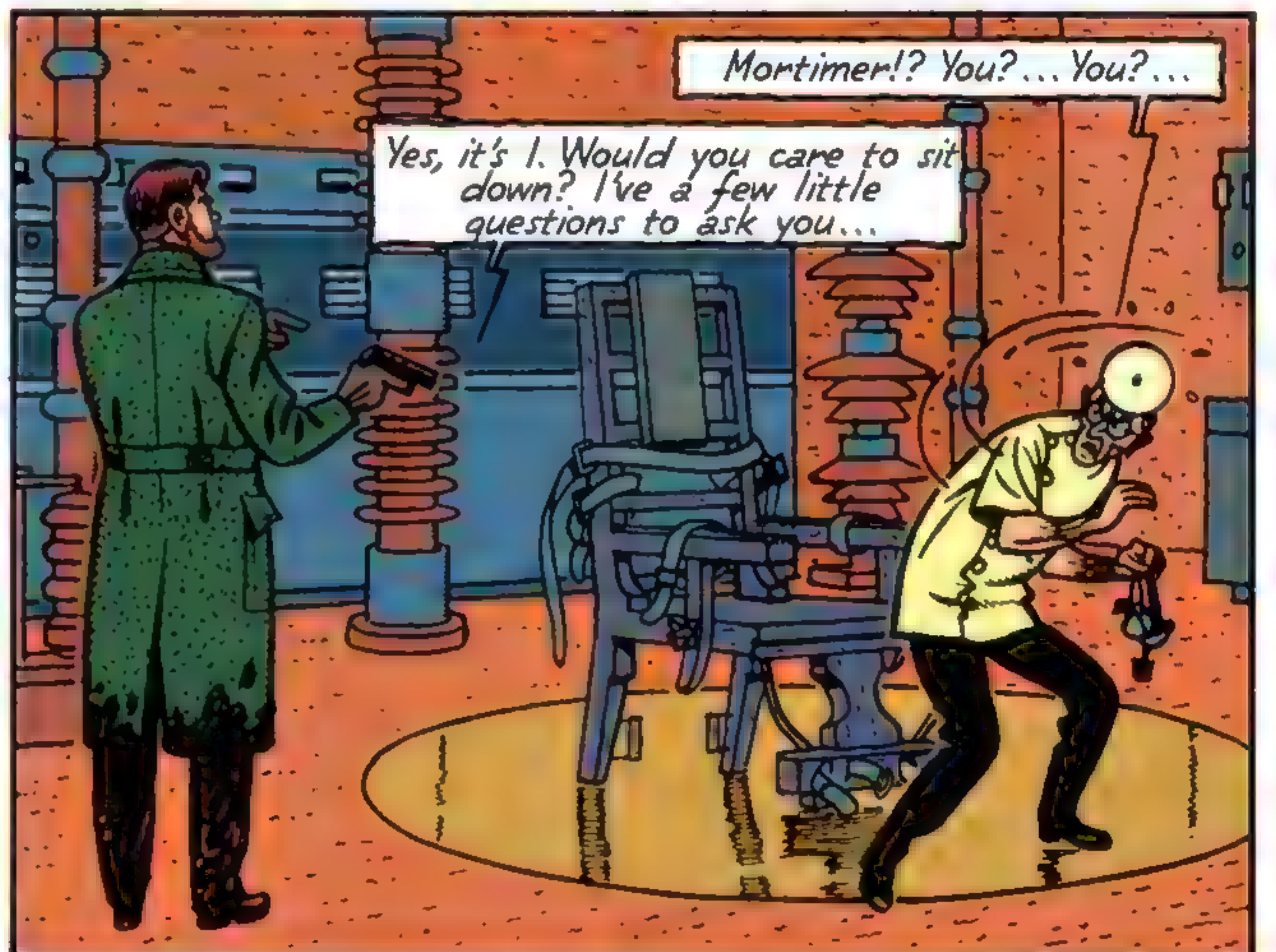


MEANWHILE, THE YELLOW "M" CONTINUES RUNNING ALONG THE FOGBOUND, DESERTED STREETS WITH MORTIMER AT HIS HEELS. BUT THE LATTER, LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE, NO LONGER ATTEMPTS TO APPROACH THE DANGEROUS FUGITIVE BUT FEELS OBLIGED TO KEEP FOLLOWING HIM TO HIS DESTINATION. ALAS, IN THE END, THE INTERMINABLE PURSUIT ENDS BY EXHAUSTING HIM.









THE FOLLOWING MORNING...

WHEN THE POLICE, WHO HAVE VAINLY EXPLORED THE DOCKS AREA IN ALL DIRECTIONS, RETURN TO SCOTLAND YARD, BLAKE AND KENDALL BETAKE THEMSELVES TO PARK LANE TO QUESTION MRS. BENSON, THE LANDLADY. UNFORTUNATELY, SHE HAS LITTLE TO TELL THEM, AND BEFORE LEAVING, THE INSPECTOR SUMMARISES HIS REPORT.

And so, Mrs. Benson, may we summarise? About 20 minutes after the captain leaves, an unknown person with glasses and leather portfolio visits the professor; he hardly stays 10 minutes. A quarter of an hour later, the professor leaves the house on the double. Is that right?

Absolutely, Inspector. He even slammed the door when he left.

A LITTLE LATER, THE INSPECTOR TAKES LEAVE OF BLAKE.

Until we have some definite information about the professor, I would be rather inclined not to spread this story around. You know how the press is...

I agree...

I'll dash to the Yard. We'll go through town with a fine comb. But my advice to you is to have a good rest. That's what you're short of.

Thanks, old man. But my word! I've still got plenty to do. So long!

AT THE SAME TIME, IN DOCTOR SEPTIMUS'S LABORATORY, MORTIMER IS COMING OUT OF HIS HEAVY HYPNOTIC STUPOR AND REOPENS HIS EYES IN A BRILLIANTLY LIT ROOM.

DOCTOR SEPTIMUS IS STANDING BEFORE HIM WITH A SARDONIC SMILE ON HIS FACE.

So, my dear fellow. Has the rest done you good? By the way, did you know that you snore?

What? What is that?

Joking aside, my dear Professor, it was really very good of you to put yourself in my hands, just as I was preparing to obtain this result through painstaking and clever plans.

SUDDENLY MORTIMER RUSHES ANGRILY AT SEPTIMUS. BUT...

You wretch!

...HE HAS TAKEN ONLY THREE STEPS WHEN HE COLLIDES VIOLENTLY WITH AN INVISIBLE OBSTACLE...

OW!

Ha, ha, ha! What do you think of my electromagnetic curtain? A little invention of mine, very useful for calming agitated people, as you see!...

?

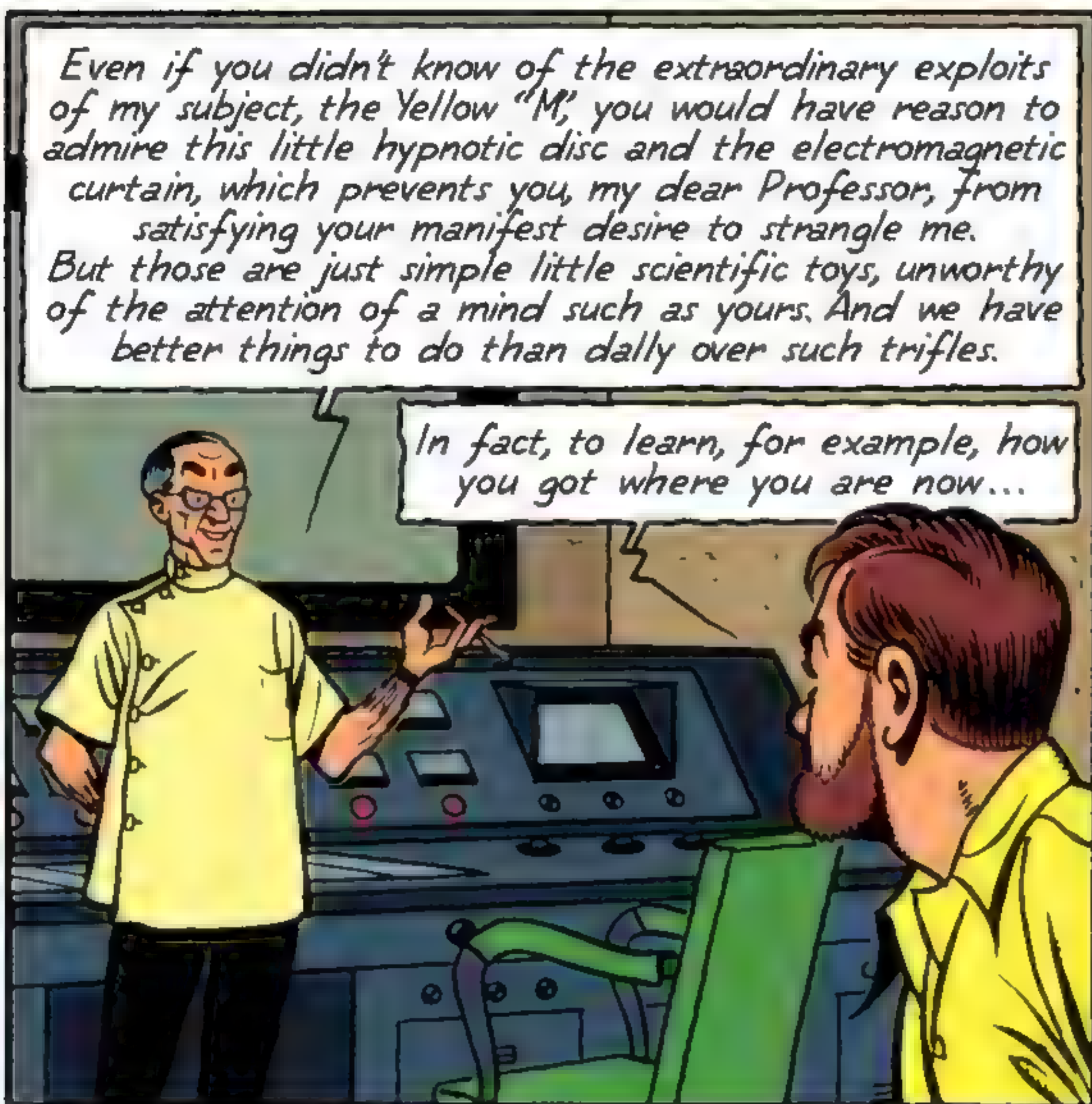
MORTIMER LEAPS TO HIS FEET AND SEIZES A CHAIR MENACINGLY...

Just leave that chair right where it is. If you were to throw it, it would collide with the same obstacle and risk injuring you, which I would greatly regret!

UNDERSTANDING, FINALLY, THAT HE IS THE WEAKER PARTY, MORTIMER SPORTINGLY RESIGNS HIMSELF...

Excellent! There's a reasonable fellow! Sit down, then... I have much to tell you!...

All right. I'm listening!...

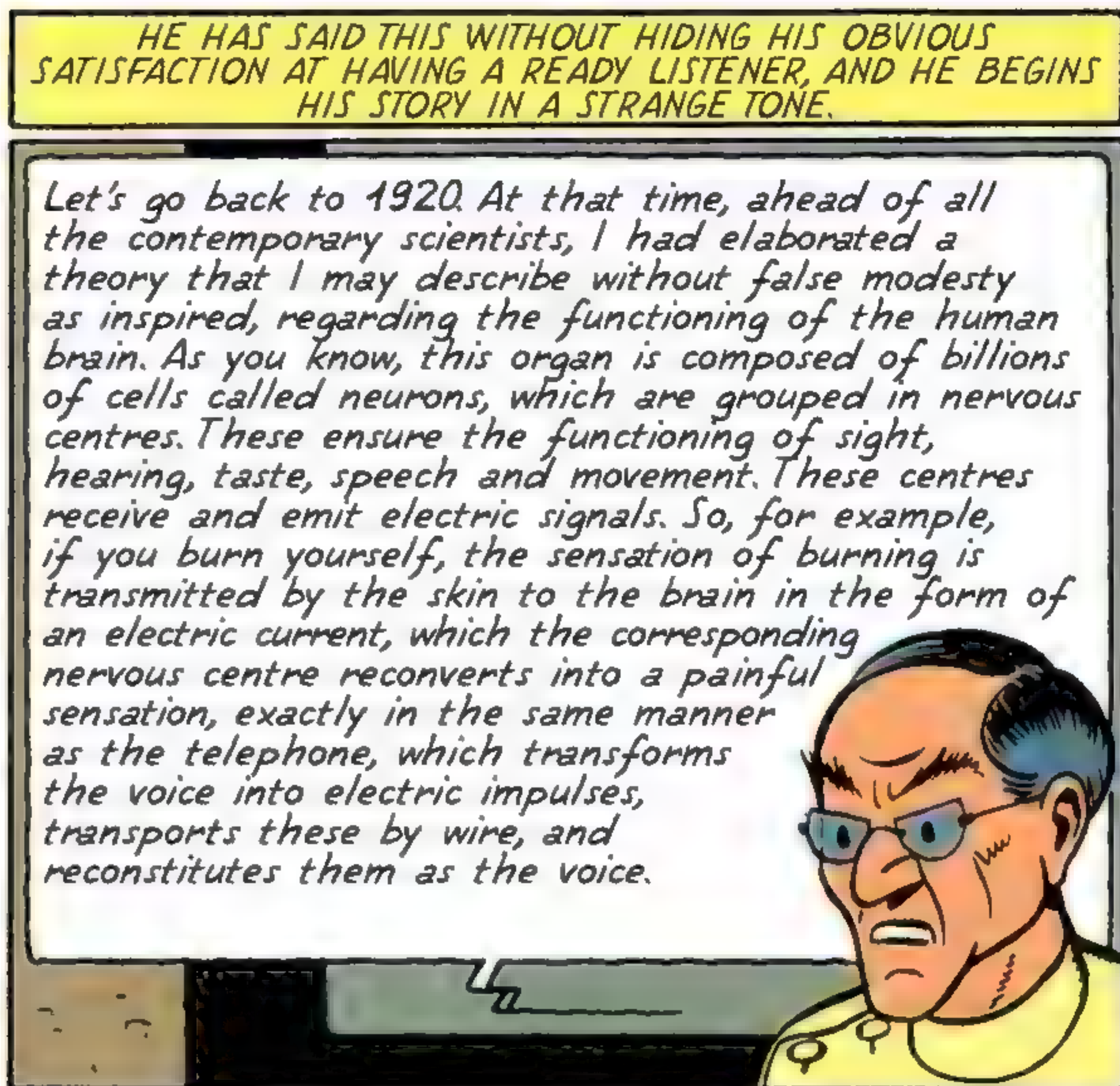


Even if you didn't know of the extraordinary exploits of my subject, the Yellow "M", you would have reason to admire this little hypnotic disc and the electromagnetic curtain, which prevents you, my dear Professor, from satisfying your manifest desire to strangle me. But those are just simple little scientific toys, unworthy of the attention of a mind such as yours. And we have better things to do than dally over such trifles.

In fact, to learn, for example, how you got where you are now...

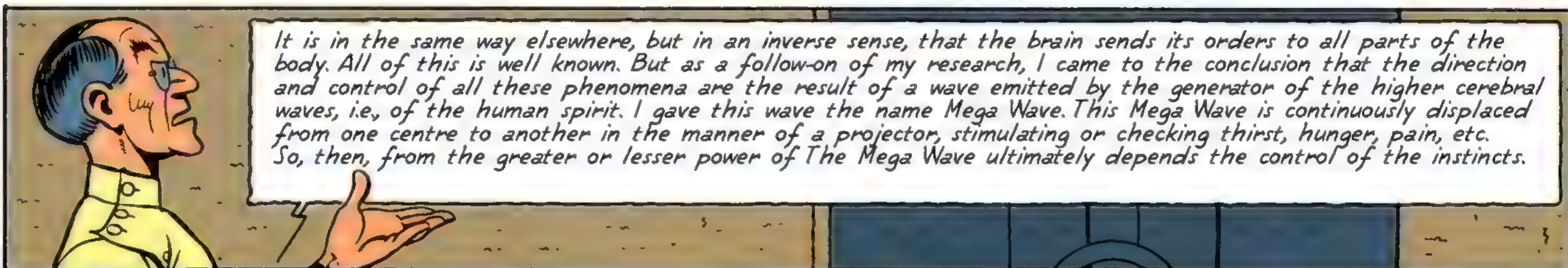


Precisely. And your curiosity will be fully satisfied, and without prejudice to myself, because in any case you won't get out of here alive, and that grieves me very much.

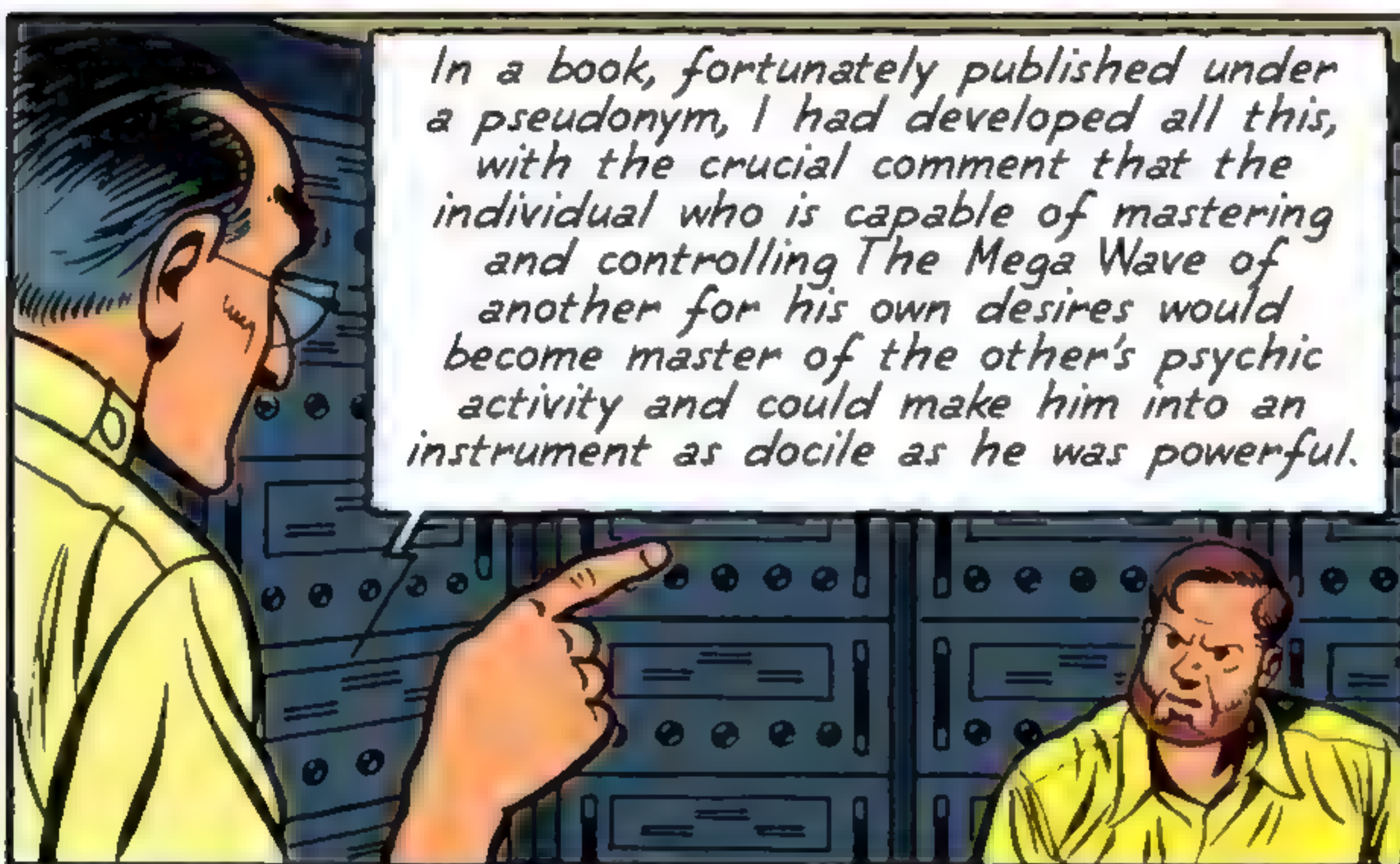


HE HAS SAID THIS WITHOUT HIDING HIS OBVIOUS SATISFACTION AT HAVING A READY LISTENER, AND HE BEGINS HIS STORY IN A STRANGE TONE.

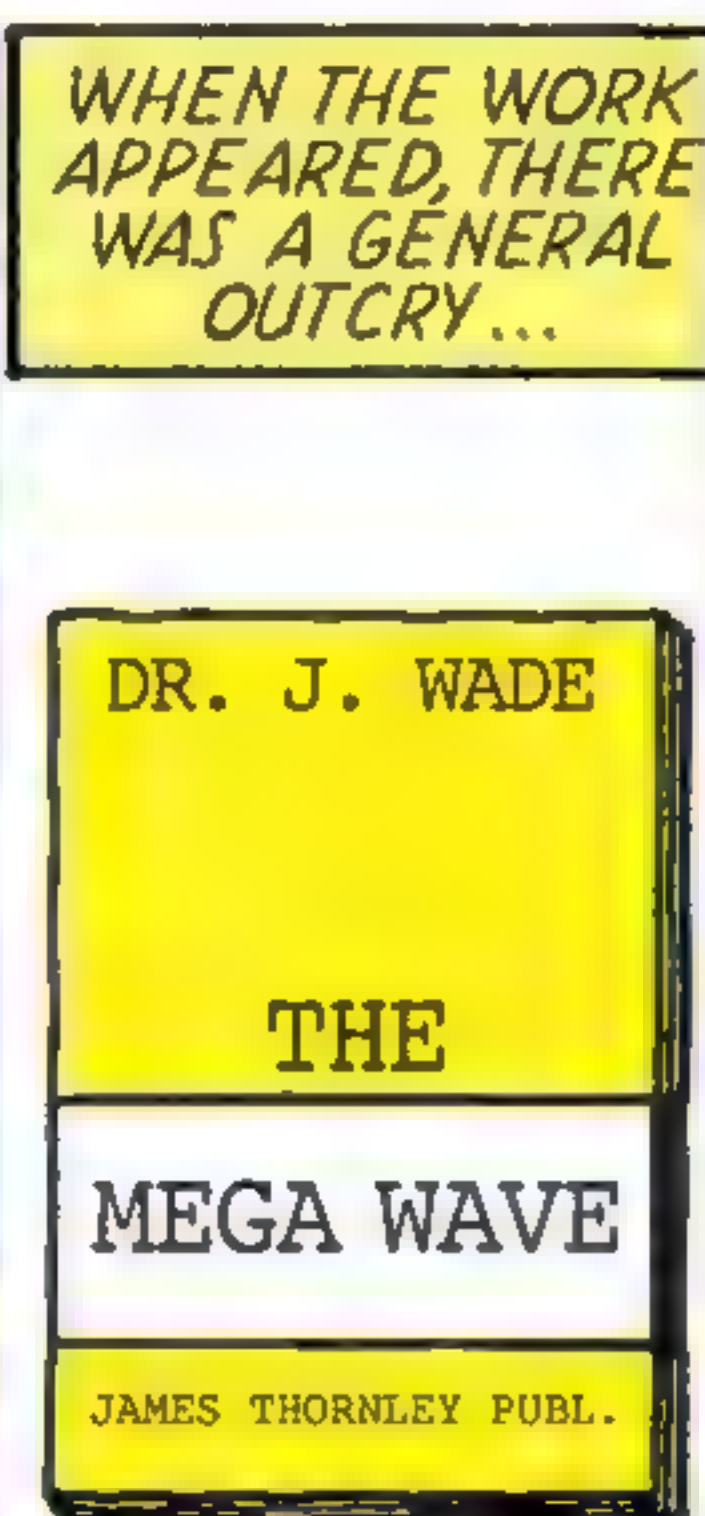
Let's go back to 1920. At that time, ahead of all the contemporary scientists, I had elaborated a theory that I may describe without false modesty as inspired, regarding the functioning of the human brain. As you know, this organ is composed of billions of cells called neurons, which are grouped in nervous centres. These ensure the functioning of sight, hearing, taste, speech and movement. These centres receive and emit electric signals. So, for example, if you burn yourself, the sensation of burning is transmitted by the skin to the brain in the form of an electric current, which the corresponding nervous centre reconverts into a painful sensation, exactly in the same manner as the telephone, which transforms the voice into electric impulses, transports these by wire, and reconstitutes them as the voice.



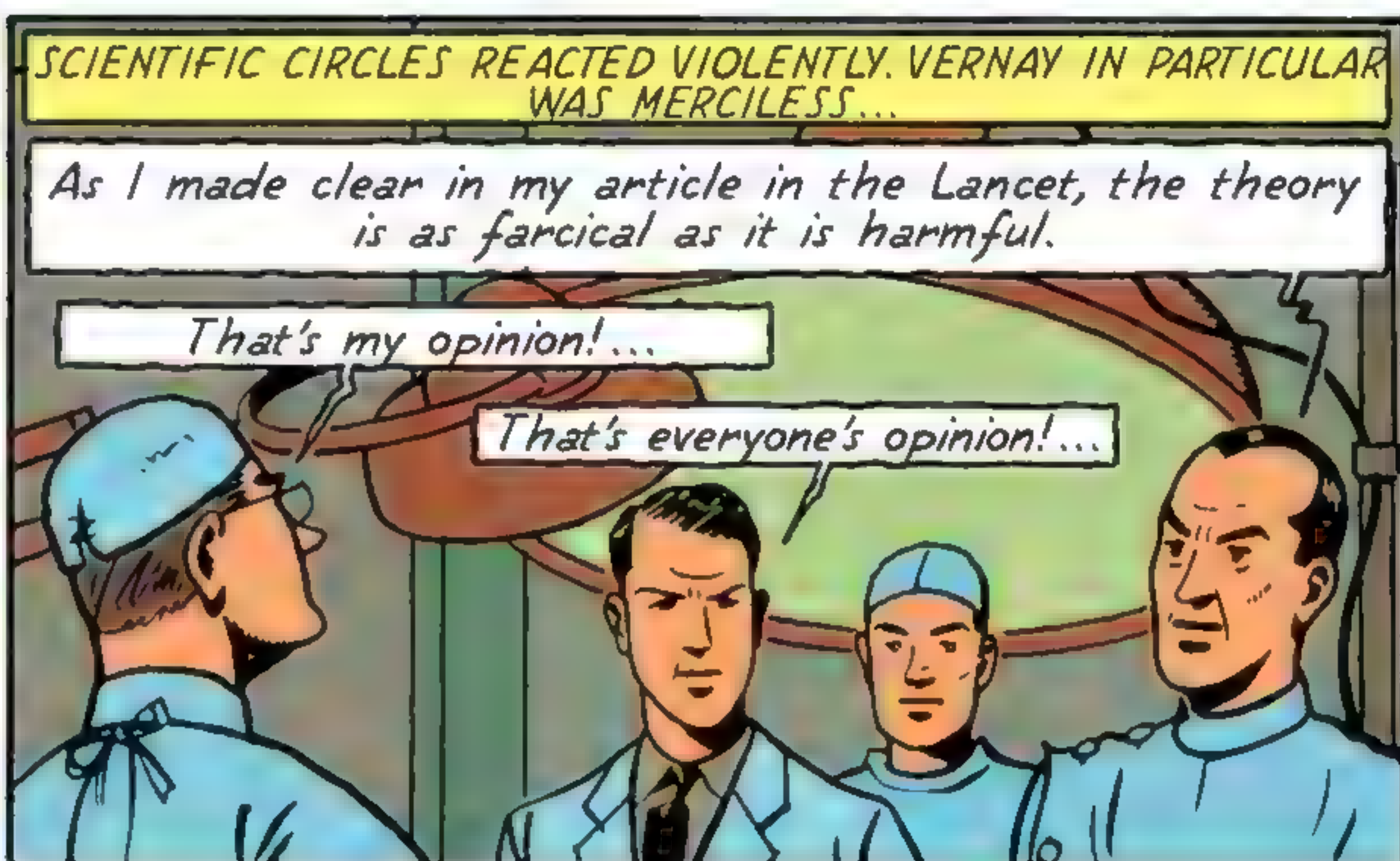
It is in the same way elsewhere, but in an inverse sense, that the brain sends its orders to all parts of the body. All of this is well known. But as a follow-on of my research, I came to the conclusion that the direction and control of all these phenomena are the result of a wave emitted by the generator of the higher cerebral waves, i.e., of the human spirit. I gave this wave the name Mega Wave. This Mega Wave is continuously displaced from one centre to another in the manner of a projector, stimulating or checking thirst, hunger, pain, etc. So, then, from the greater or lesser power of The Mega Wave ultimately depends the control of the instincts.



In a book, fortunately published under a pseudonym, I had developed all this, with the crucial comment that the individual who is capable of mastering and controlling The Mega Wave of another for his own desires would become master of the other's psychic activity and could make him into an instrument as docile as he was powerful.



WHEN THE WORK APPEARED, THERE WAS A GENERAL OUTCRY...



SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES REACTED VIOLENTLY. VERNAY IN PARTICULAR WAS MERCILESS...

As I made clear in my article in the Lancet, the theory is as farcical as it is harmful.

That's my opinion!...

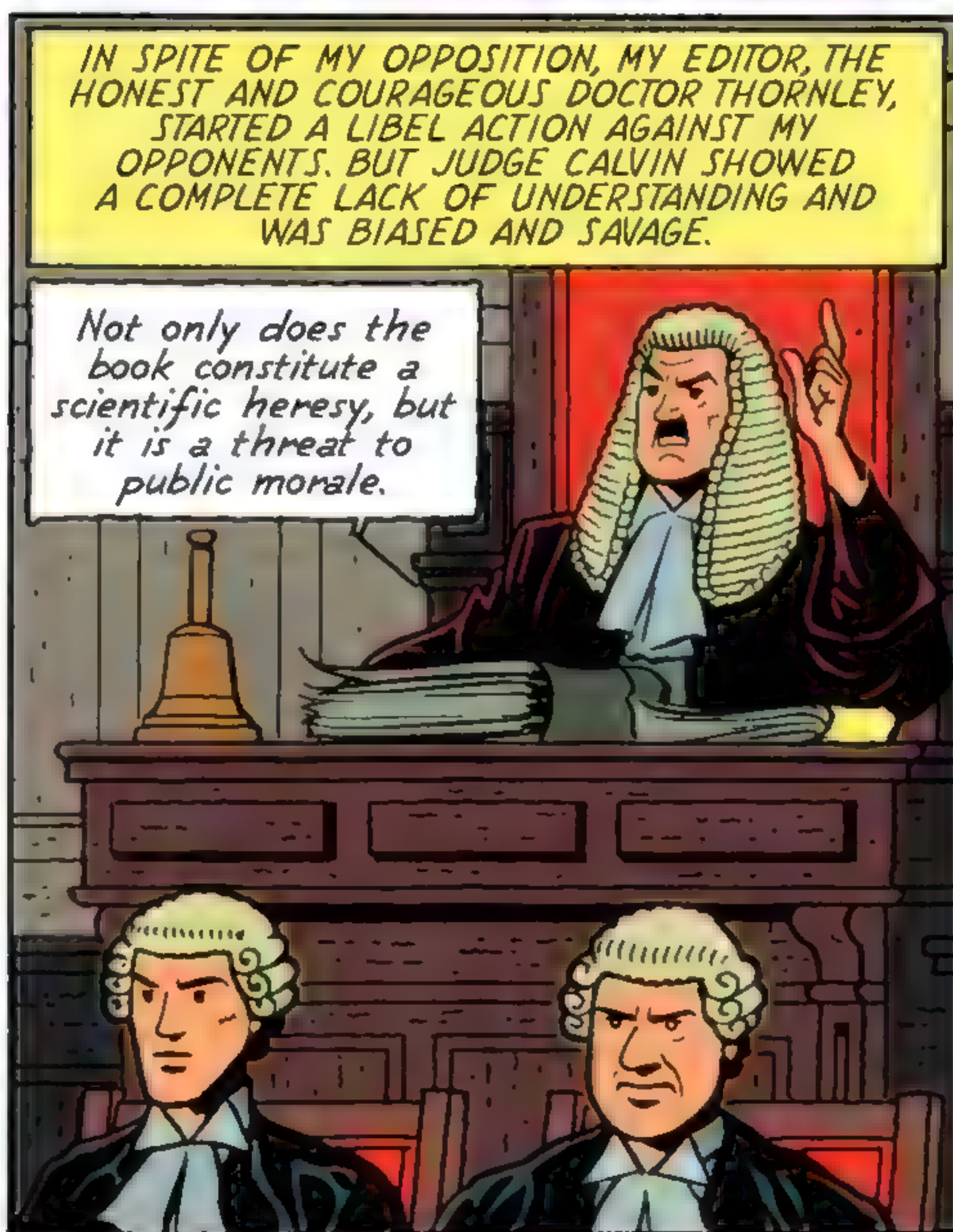
That's everyone's opinion!...



THE PRESS IN ITS TURN WAS LET LOOSE... MACOMBER WROTE A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT WERE SATIRIC AND COVERED ME WITH RIDICULE.

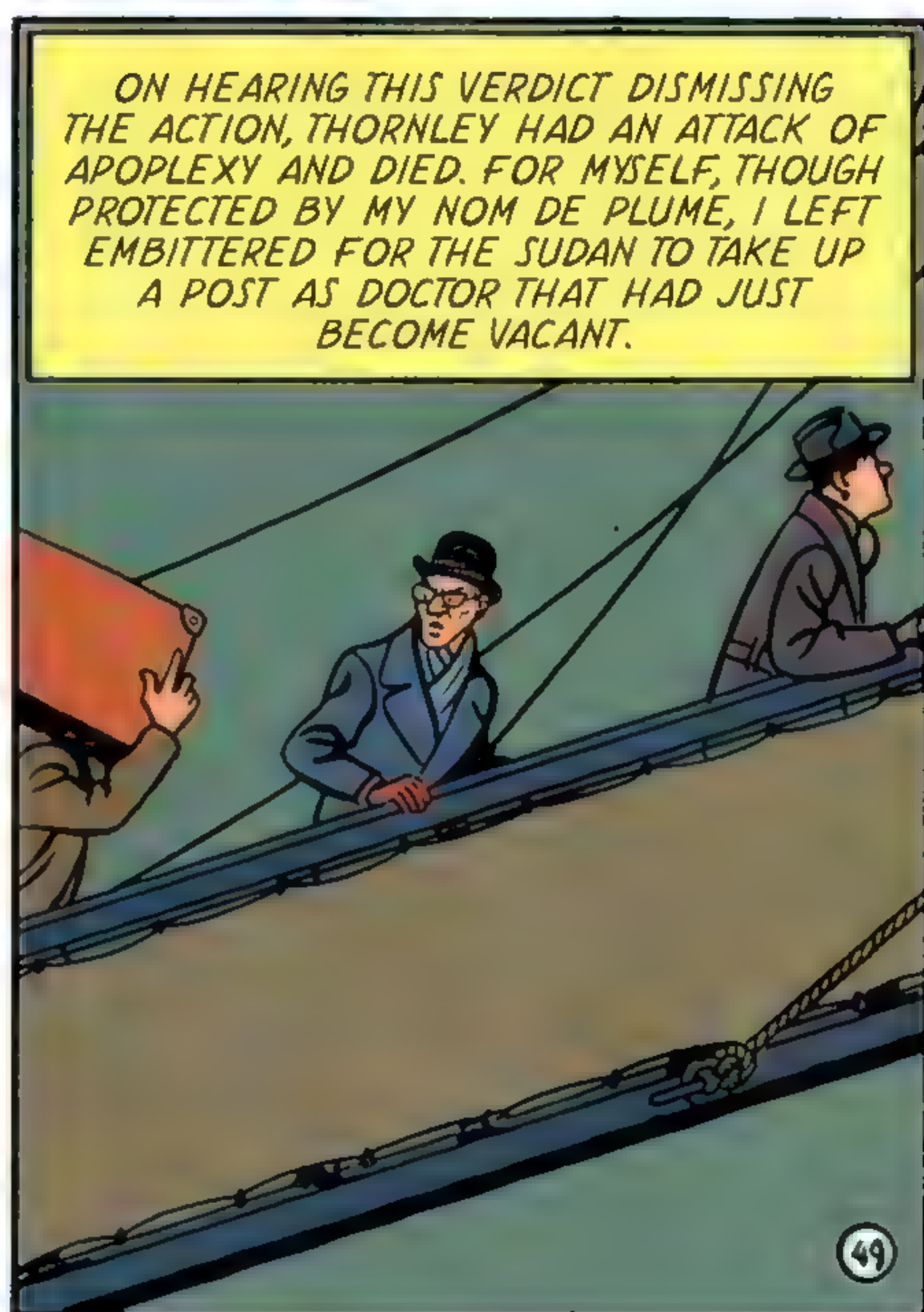
Well, old fellow, if your Doctor Wade gets up on his feet after that one...

Ha, ha. I confess I'm not disappointed with my effort...



IN SPITE OF MY OPPOSITION, MY EDITOR, THE HONEST AND COURAGEOUS DOCTOR THORNLEY, STARTED A LIBEL ACTION AGAINST MY OPPONENTS. BUT JUDGE CALVIN SHOWED A COMPLETE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND WAS BIASED AND SAVAGE.

Not only does the book constitute a scientific heresy, but it is a threat to public morale.

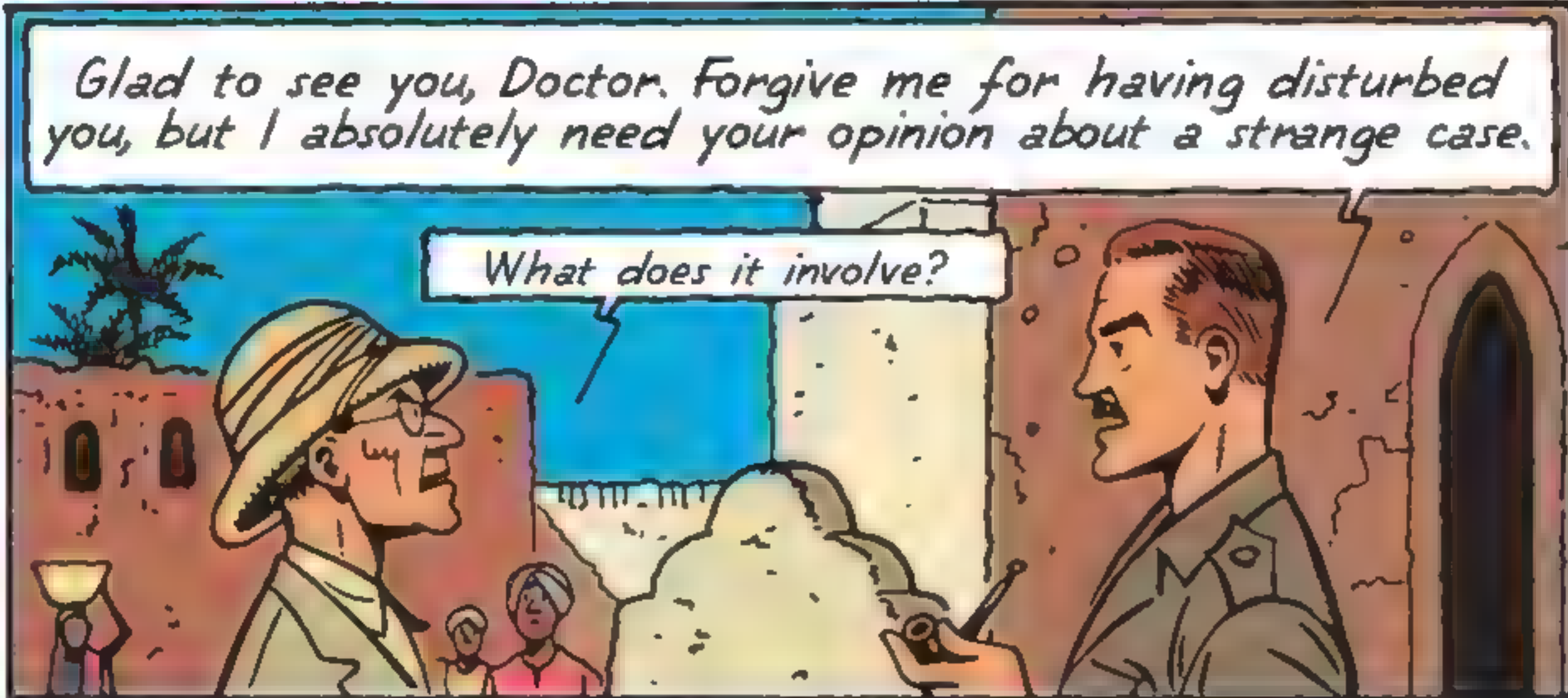
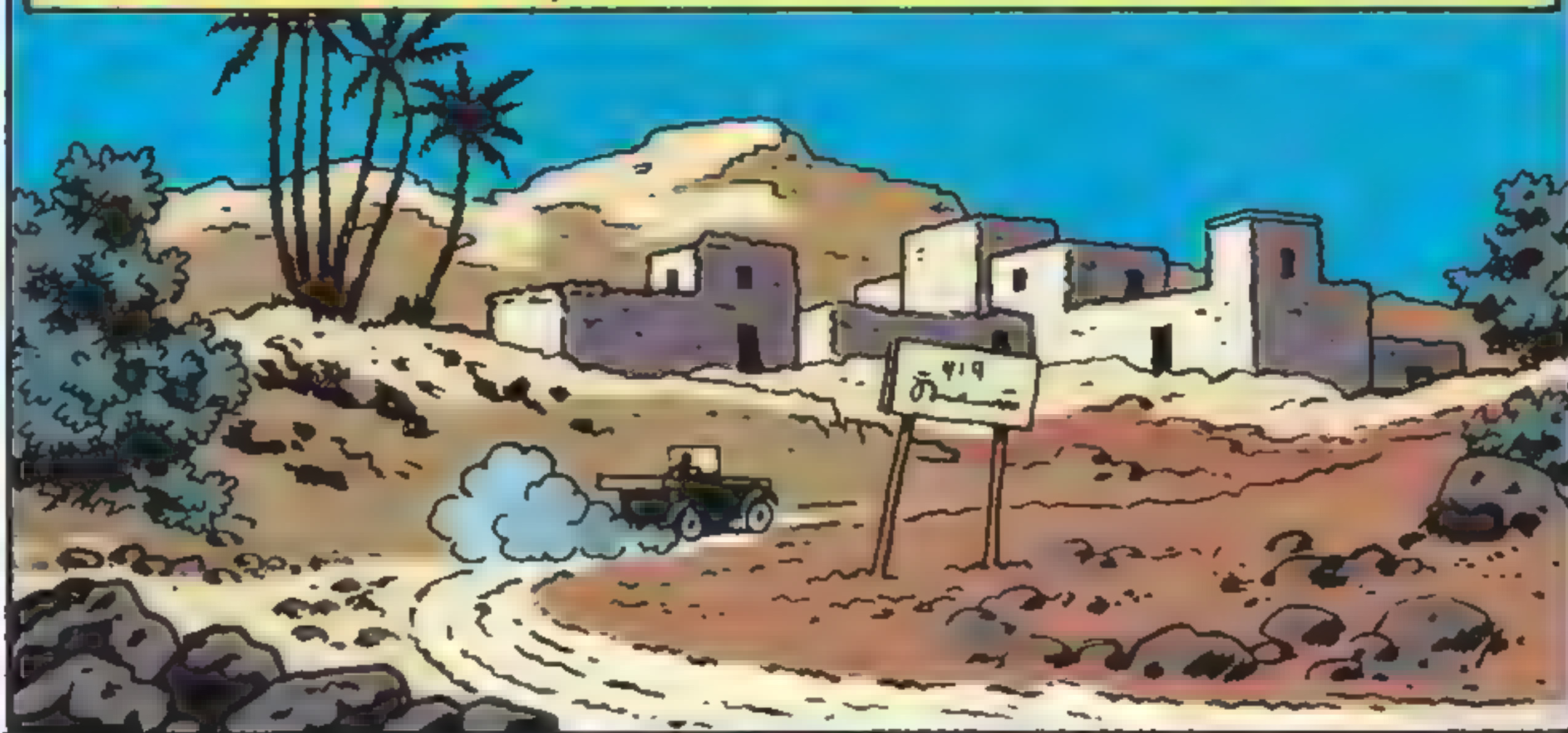


ON HEARING THIS VERDICT DISMISSING THE ACTION, THORNLEY HAD AN ATTACK OF APOPLEXY AND DIED. FOR MYSELF, THOUGH PROTECTED BY MY NOM DE PLUME, I LEFT EMBITTERED FOR THE SUDAN TO TAKE UP A POST AS DOCTOR THAT HAD JUST BECOME VACANT.

YEARS PASSED. I HAD ESTABLISHED MYSELF IN FANAKA, A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE PROVINCE OF THE BLUE NILE. ABSORBED BY MY WORK, I HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN PAST INSULTS... WHEN ONE DAY, I RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DISTRICT ASKING ME TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS.



SO I MADE MY WAY THE NEXT DAY TO WISKO, AN ISOLATED POST IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT, WHERE THE COMMISSIONER WAS AT THE TIME.



LEADING ME TO A NEARBY HUT, DRUMMOND TOLD ME THE STORY.

During a tour of the desert yesterday, we came across a sort of wild madman, a white man of about thirty, who seemed to be making violent threats against invisible enemies. With some difficulty, we brought him in, but all our efforts have failed to calm him down or to get anything out of him. I then thought that you might be able to help, as you have had a great deal to do with psychiatry.



I WAS INTRODUCED TO A WILD, RAGGED INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS TIGHTLY BOUND AND CONSTANTLY UTTERED SAVAGE CRIES...



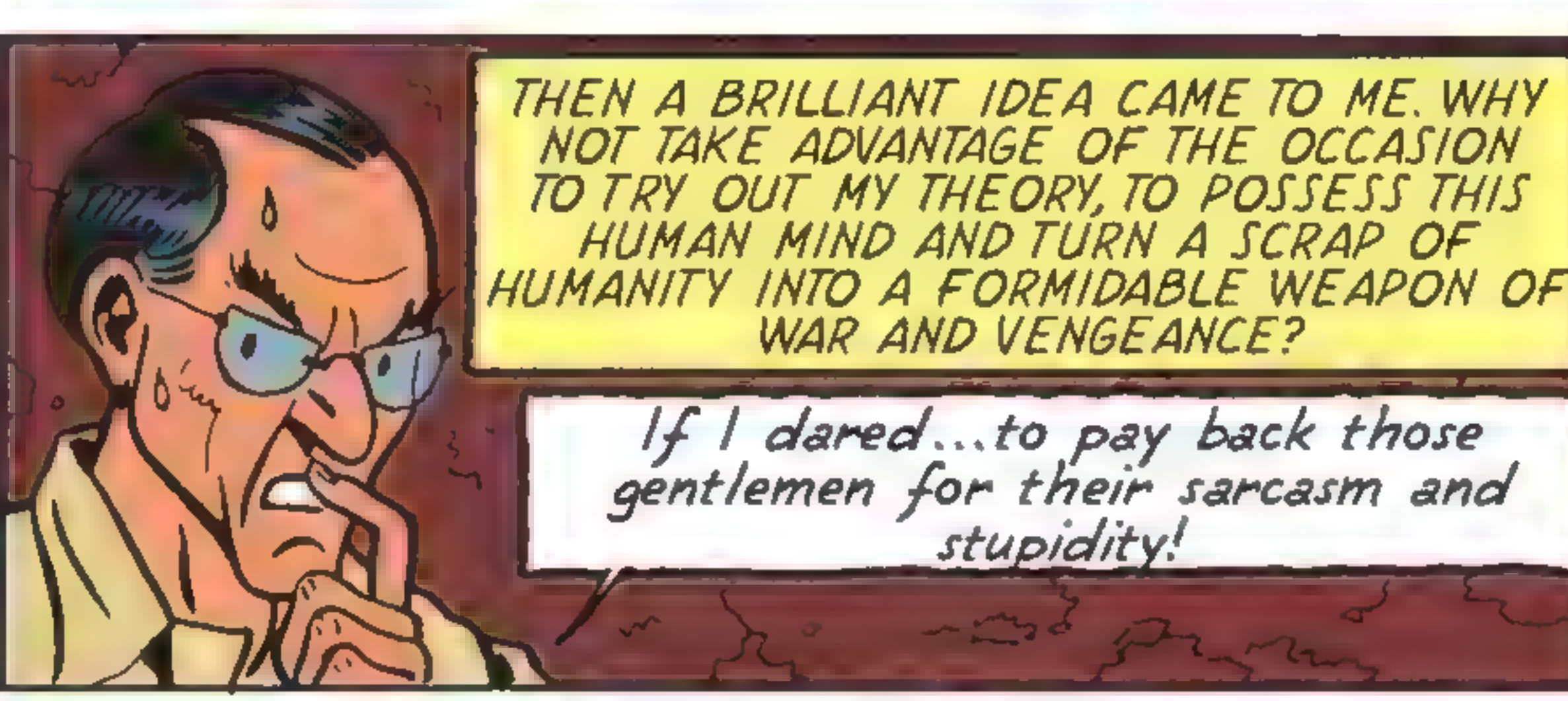
LEFT ALONE WITH THE MADMAN, I MADE SEVERAL HYPNOTIC PASSES OVER HIM, AND HE RAPIDLY CALMED DOWN, THEN SANK INTO GLOOMY DEJECTION.



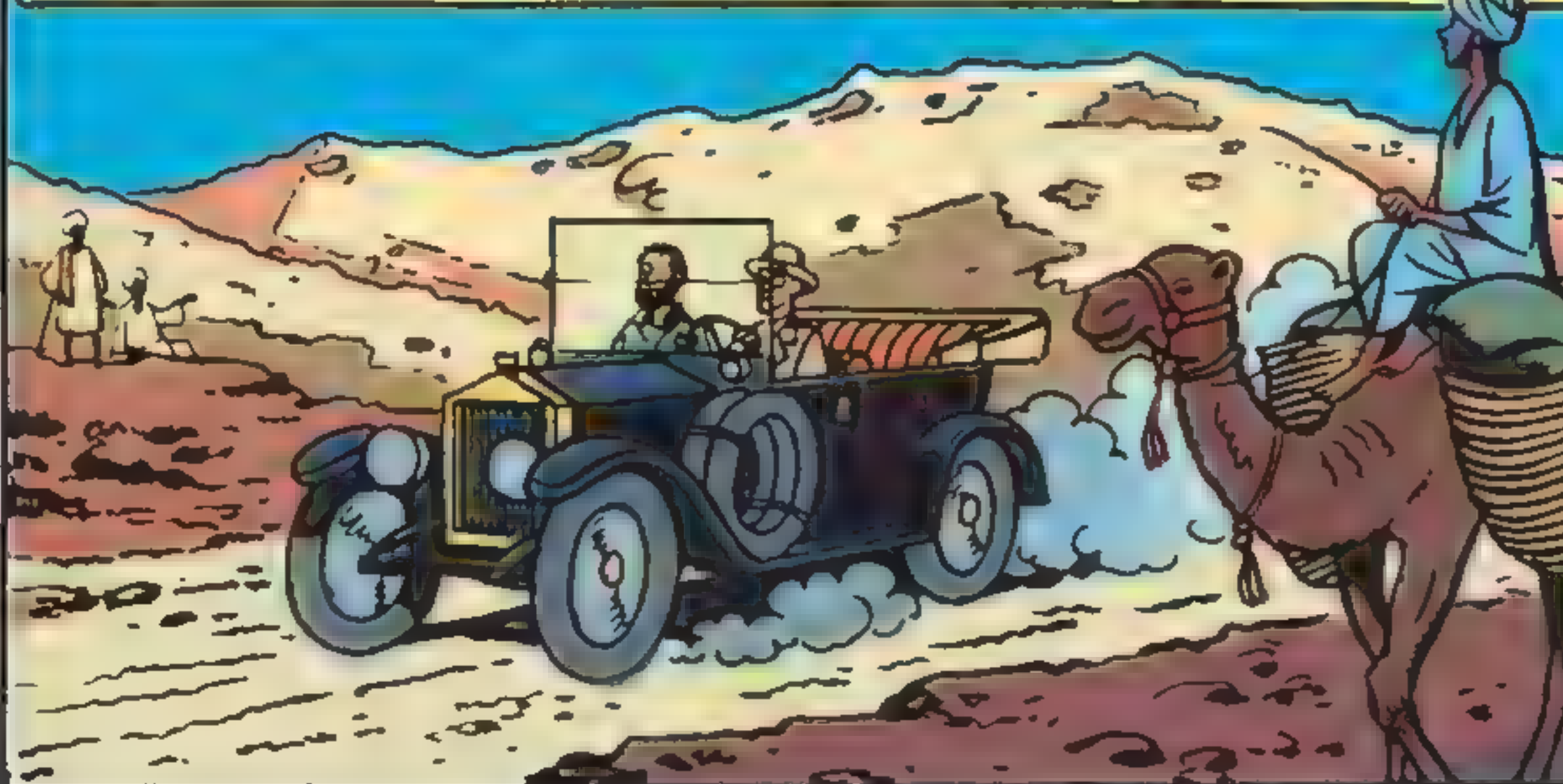
I UNIDED HIS BONDS AND THEN TRIED TO INTERROGATE HIM BUT COULD ONLY GET INCOHERENT WORDS FROM HIM, AND ALWAYS THE SAME.



THIS MAN HAD EVIDENTLY SUFFERED A MENTAL SHOCK SO VIOLENT THAT HE HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF HIS REASON, BUT NOW HE SEEMED TO WANT TO HANG ON TO ME LIKE A SHIPWRECKED MAN TO A SPAR.



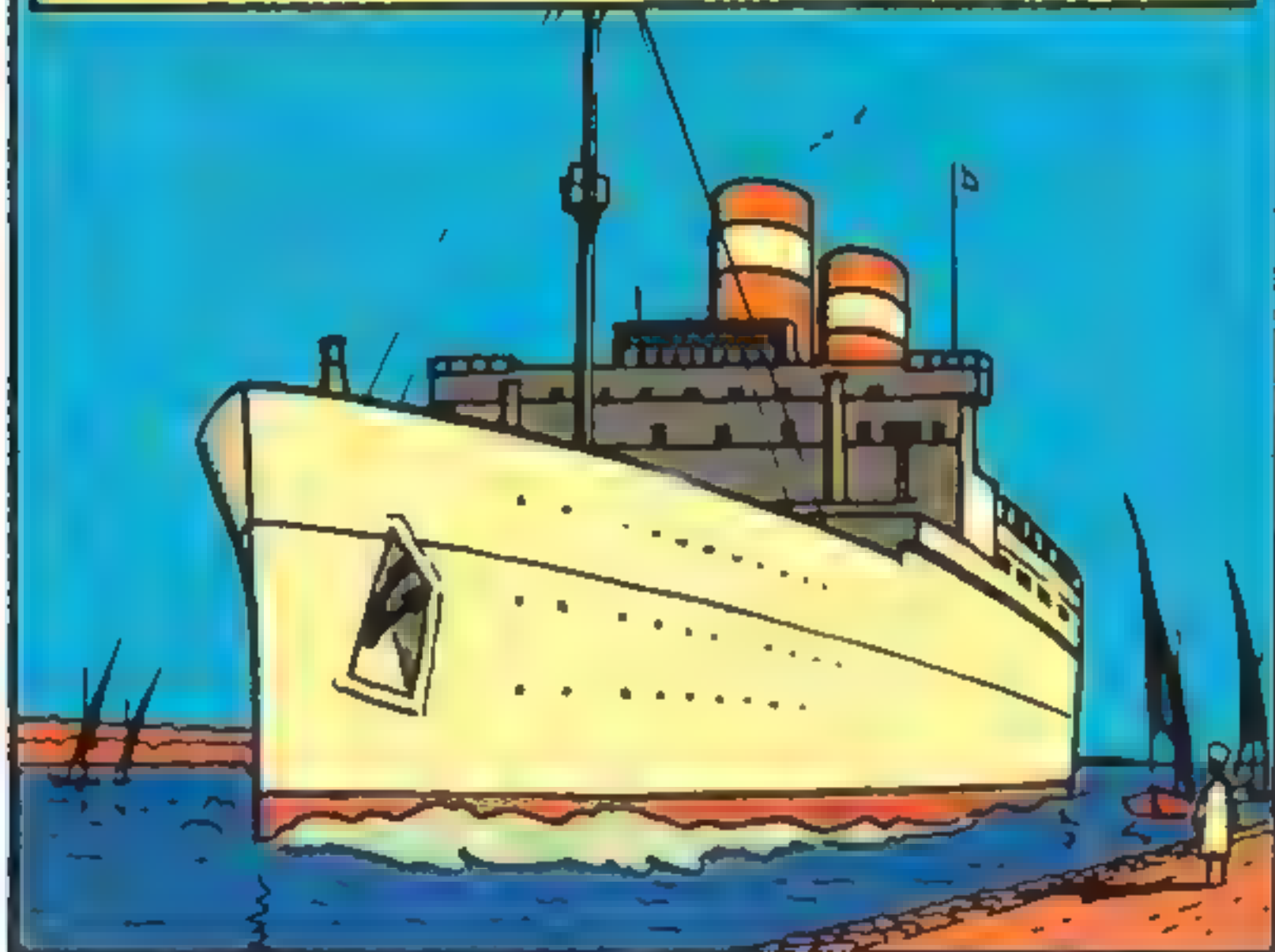
I HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN PERSUADING THE COMMISSIONER TO ENTRUST THE MISERABLE FELLOW TO MY CARE, AND TO EVERYONE'S ASTONISHMENT HE FOLLOWED ME QUITE DOCILELY.



AT THIS POINT IN SEPTIMUS'S STORY, MORTIMER CANNOT CONTAIN HIMSELF ANY LONGER AND PUTS A QUESTION HE IS DESPERATE TO ASK.



I WAS IMPATIENT TO RESUME MY RESEARCH, BUT FOR THAT I HAD TO HAVE A SPECIALLY EQUIPPED LABORATORY. MOREOVER, AS INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS GREW WORSE FROM DAY TO DAY, I HAD TO HURRY IF I WANTED TO GET BACK TO ENGLAND IN TIME. SO I QUICKLY SETTLED MY AFFAIRS AND LEFT THE SUDAN, TAKING GUINEA PIG WITH ME AS MY SERVANT.



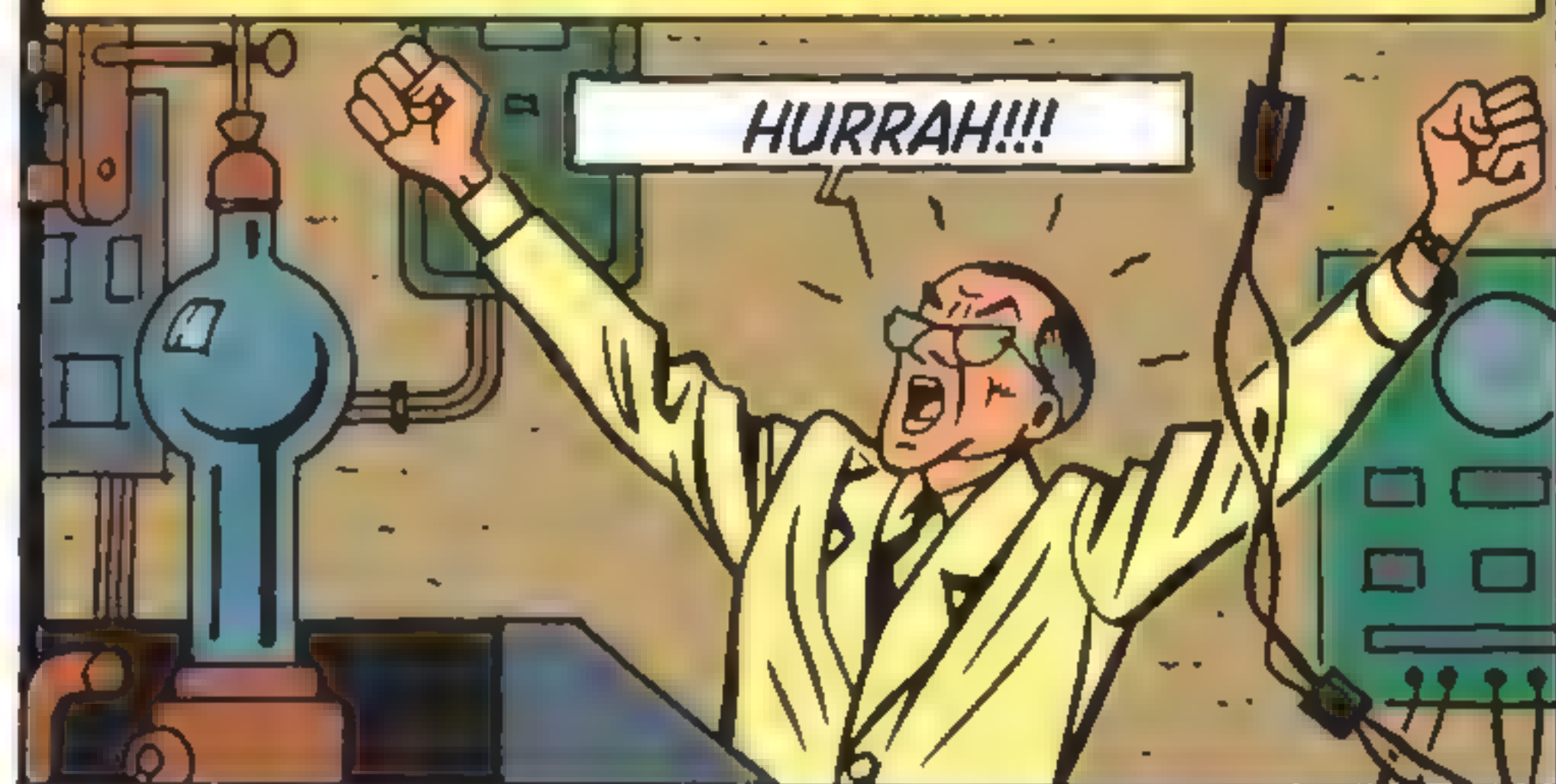
I HAD HARDLY ARRIVED IN LONDON WHEN WAR BROKE OUT. HAVING BEEN CALLED UP BY THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE, I EASILY OBTAINED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS HUGE SHELTER UNDER MY RESIDENCE WITH EMERGENCY EXIT TO THE SEWERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSTALLING AN AMBULANCE TO ACT AS OVERFLOW FOR EVACUATED HOSPITALS. OF COURSE, I SUBSEQUENTLY FITTED IT OUT WITH A VIEW TO MY OWN PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS.

Are you sure that it's solid?

Quite sure, Doctor. The Luftwaffe's heaviest bomb couldn't even shake it.



SPURRED ON BY MY HATRED, I THREW MYSELF BODY AND SOUL INTO MY RESEARCH. NOT A MOMENT WAS LOST, APART FROM MY OFFICIAL DUTIES. APPLYING THE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS IN RADIOELECTRIC SCIENCE DURING THE WAR TO MY OWN WORK, I GRADUALLY BROUGHT TO PERFECTION THE APPARATUS THAT WAS GOING TO REVOLUTIONISE ALL BRAIN SCIENCE. SO, THE END OF HOSTILITIES WAS THE SIGNAL FOR ME TO GET MY REVENGE BECAUSE I, SEPTIMUS, HAD JUST REALISED THE GREATEST DISCOVERY OF ALL TIME: THE TELECEPHALOSCOPE!!!



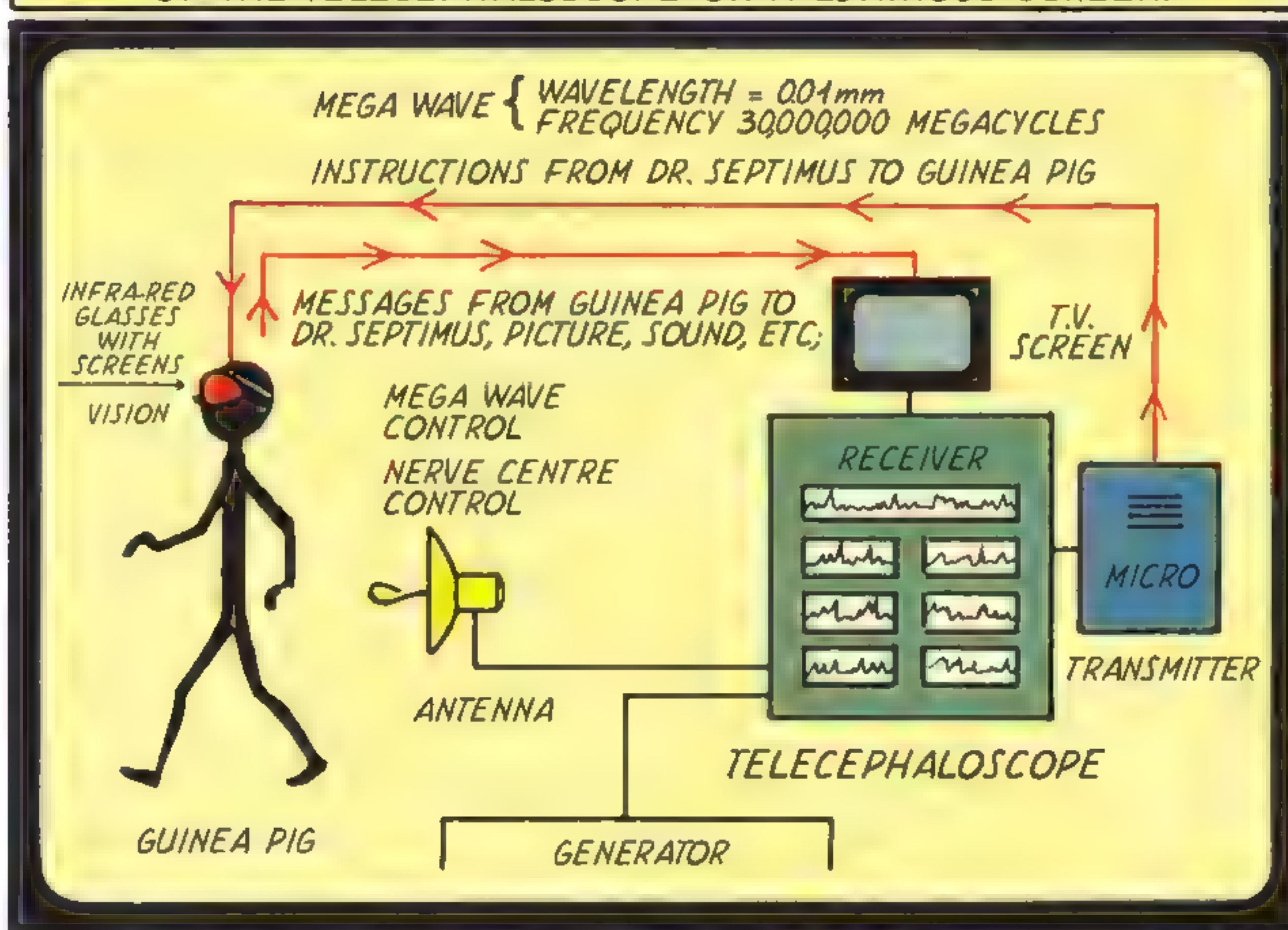
The tele what?



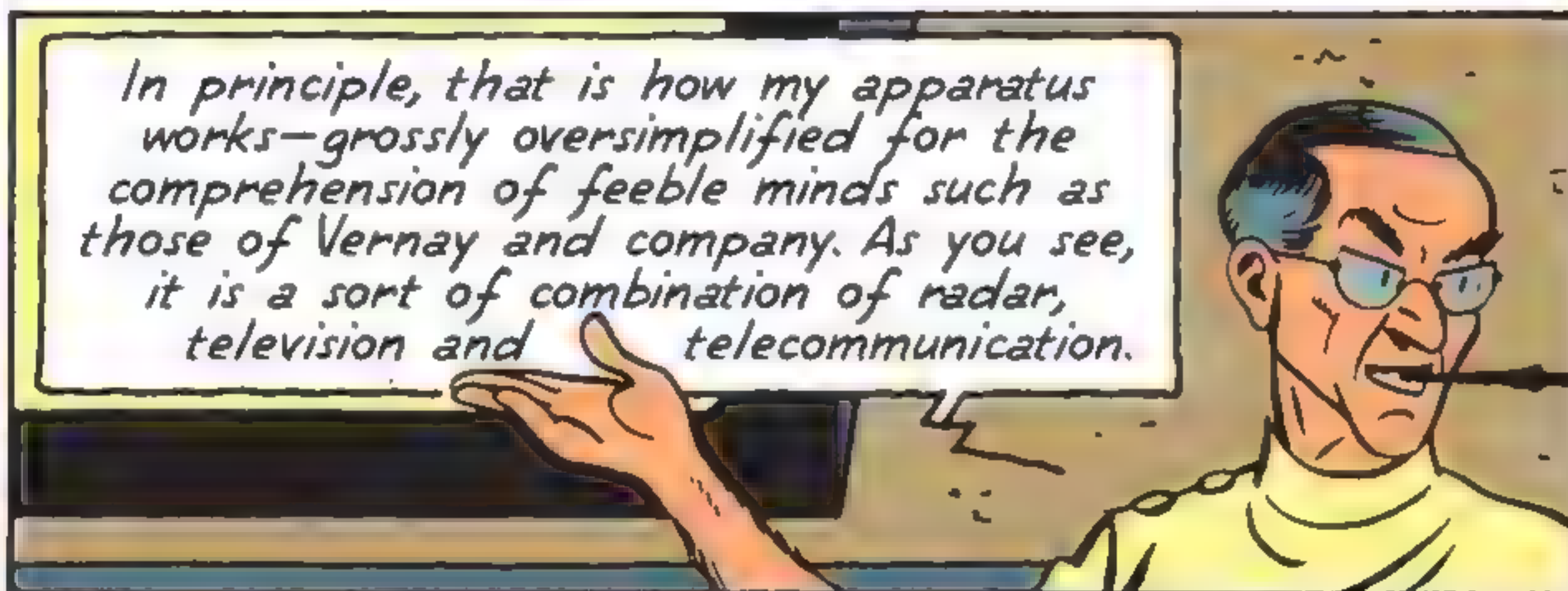
The telecephaloscope. My poor Mortimer! As described in my book, once this is tuned in to the mental frequency of the subject, it enables one to guide, control and stimulate his Mega Wave from a distance and thus give him superhuman strength and an absolute disregard for danger. My apparatus has only one defect; at the moment, anyway, it cannot react on the subconscious or on certain reflexes. Hence, without doubt, my last two failure... But look at this!...



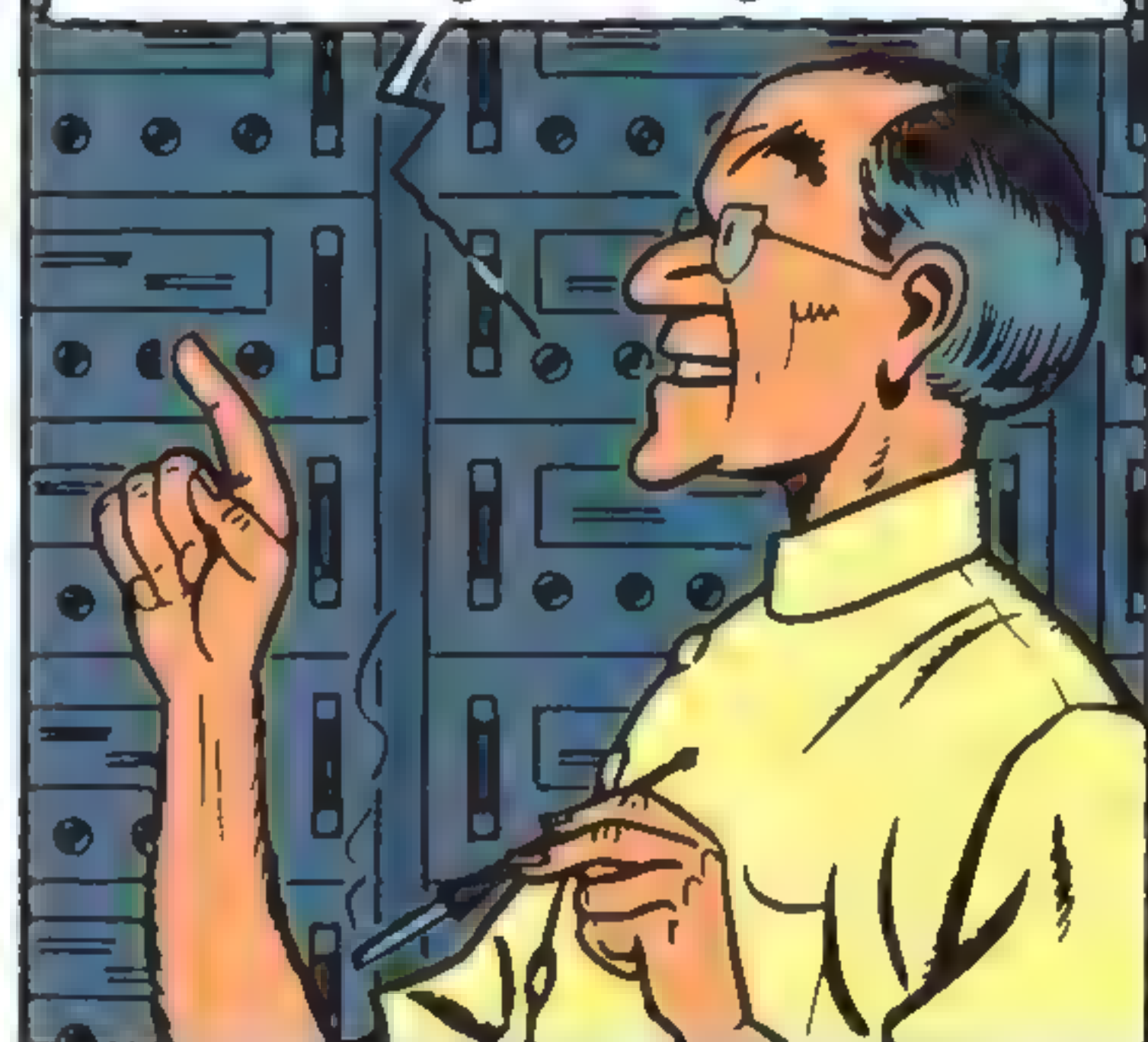
PRESSING A KNOB, THE DOCTOR DISPLAYS A DIAGRAM OF THE TELECEPHALOSCOPE ON A LUMINOUS SCREEN.



In principle, that is how my apparatus works—grossly oversimplified for the comprehension of feeble minds such as those of Vernay and company. As you see, it is a sort of combination of radar, television and telecommunication.



During all his travels, at whatever distance, I can follow Guinea Pig's movements on the screen. With his eyes acting as T.V. cameras, the images captured by his retina are transmitted to his brain, which in turn transmits them to the telecephaloscope through The Mega Wave. Sounds reach me by a similar system. It only remains for me to telecommunicate my orders to the subject according to the place, circumstances and turn of events. Naturally, the most delicate operation consists of isolating, capturing and measuring The Mega Wave.



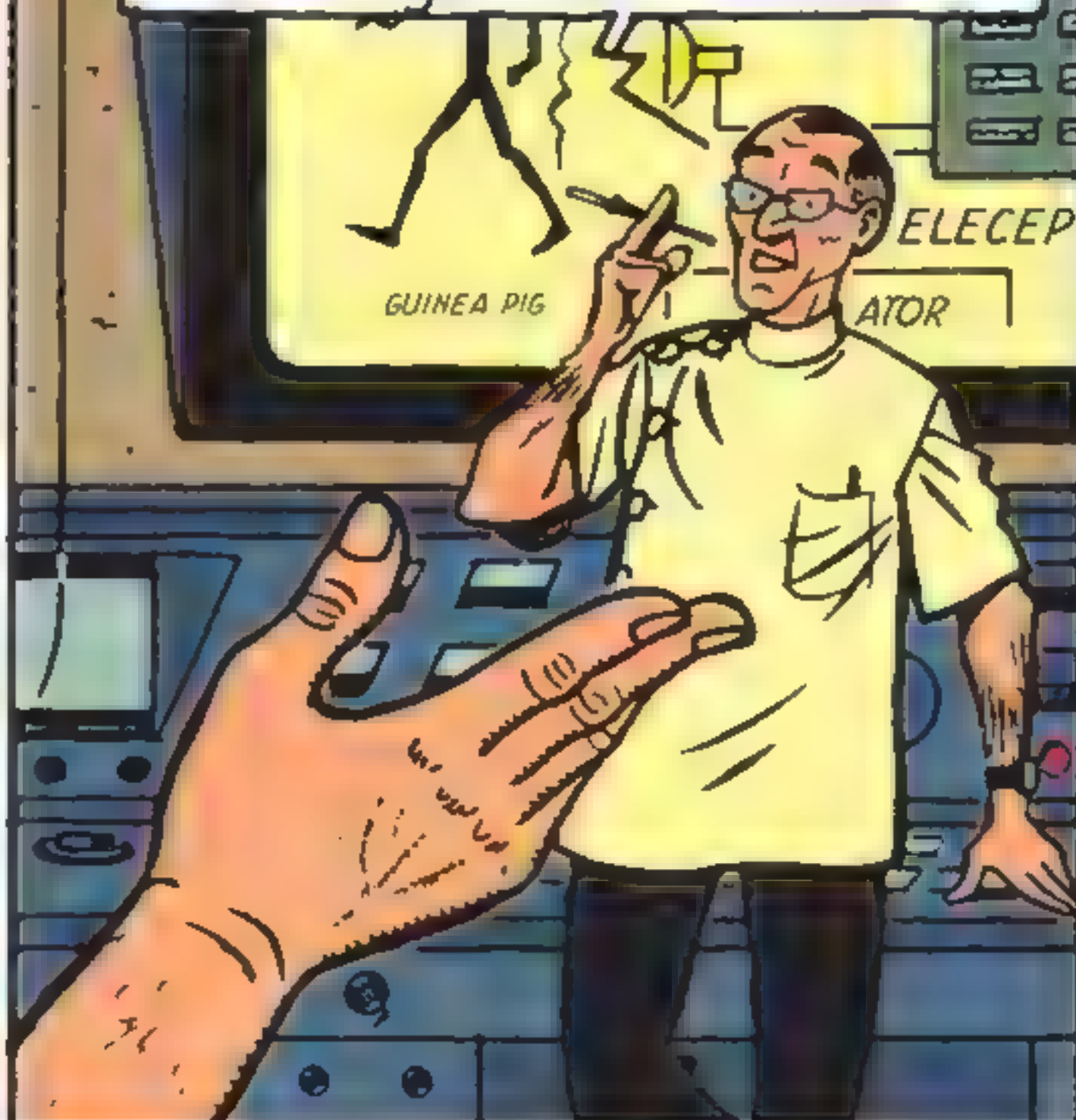
And how do you make your man invulnerable?

Quite simply. You will certainly know that living creatures possess a more or less powerful electromagnetic force. Witness the electric eel and electric ray. These fish are capable of releasing a powerful electric discharge in the event of danger. I have succeeded in amplifying the potential cellular energy of Guinea Pig to the point of providing him with a sort of electromagnetic breastplate, from which light ammunition will ricochet. As well, it will inflict a severe shock on anyone striking him. Finally, it is even sufficiently effective to enable him to ignore flames, which it extinguishes immediately.



Remarkable. And, supposing I believed your theories, his ability to see through darkness and fog would be due to what?

Spectacles furnished with an infrared screen, a device so reduced in size as to be contained in a light crash helmet!



You know the rest. I began by amusing myself with the sole intention of letting Guinea Pig prowl around, rather childishly signing my exploits with the Greek letter mu. Then you and Blake interfered, but I intercepted your plans from the evening of your arrival at the club. So, you in no way prevented me from abducting Vernay, Macomber and Calvin. The time for a showdown had come, and I was eager to get my revenge on those three responsible for my cruel humiliation!!!

You wretch! What have you done?

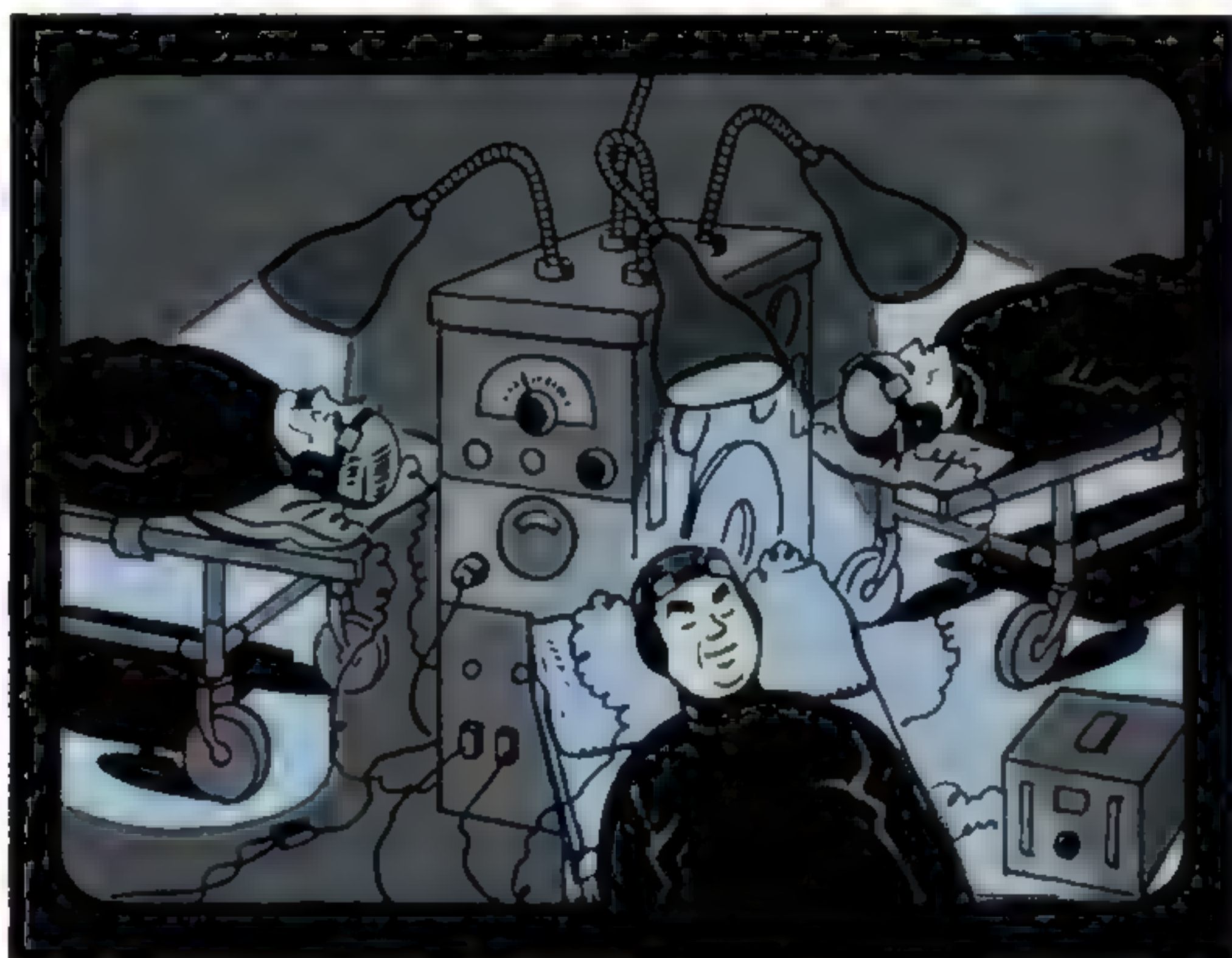


WITH A SARCASTIC LAUGH, SEPTIMUS PRESSES A KNOB AND THE DIAGRAM DISAPPEARS.

Ha ha ha! What are you thinking, Professor? Set your mind at ease. Here are those gentlemen!



THE DIAGRAM IS REPLACED BY ANOTHER IMAGE. MORTIMER PERCEIVES PROFESSOR VERNAY, MACOMBER AND JUDGE CALVIN, PRONE AND INERT AROUND A CURIOUS PIECE OF EQUIPMENT.



What does that mean?

You are privileged to witness in action my new method of re-education. The apparatus is tuned in to the mental frequencies of these individuals' brains, previously placed in a state of receptivity, in order to straighten out their warped minds. It instils in them, in a methodical and uninterrupted manner, some basic notices recorded on tape. Once they are properly re-educated, they will be my obedient slaves, some more perfect Guinea Pigs ready to obey at my whim without question.



THE APPARATUS SUDDENLY BEGINS RECITING ALOUD...

Doctor Septimus is the master. He is good. He is great. We are his humble servants. We regret our past errors. We...



THEN SUDDENLY, UPON A NEW GESTURE FROM SEPTIMUS, IT STOPS, AND ALL IS SILENT AGAIN. THE DOCTOR, HOWEVER, CONTINUES WITH AN UNEASY LOOK IN HIS EYES...

When they are at the proper stage, I shall put a grandiose plan into operation on a global scale. But, before that, I need to make an example in order to prove my power. And you are the one who will have the honour of serving my purpose. Let's see, it's the 23rd today... Well, then, this will be for tomorrow evening, the 24th December, at midnight. Happy Christmas, Professor!



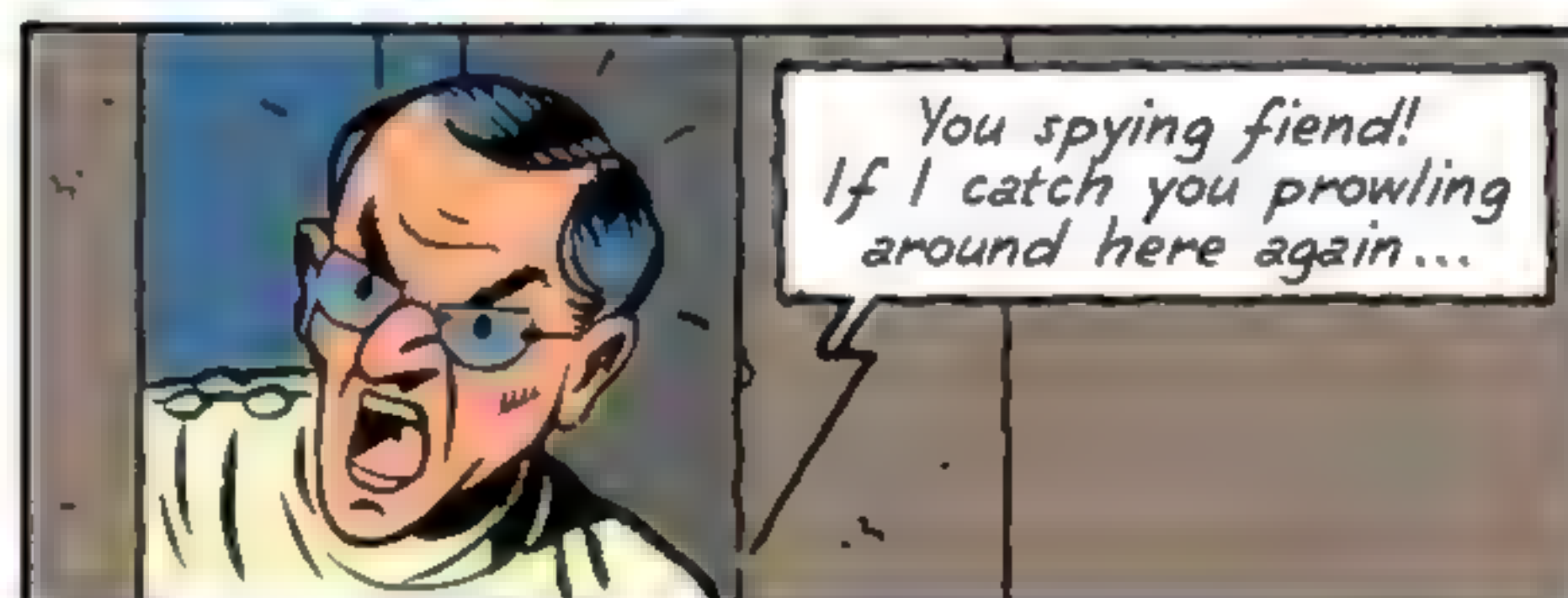
MORTIMER HAS NO TIME TO REPLY, AS THE DOCTOR QUICKLY TURNS ROUND...



...AND RUSHES TO THE DOOR, WHICH HE OPENS ANGRILY, WHILST A SILHOUETTE HURRIEDLY DISAPPEARS.

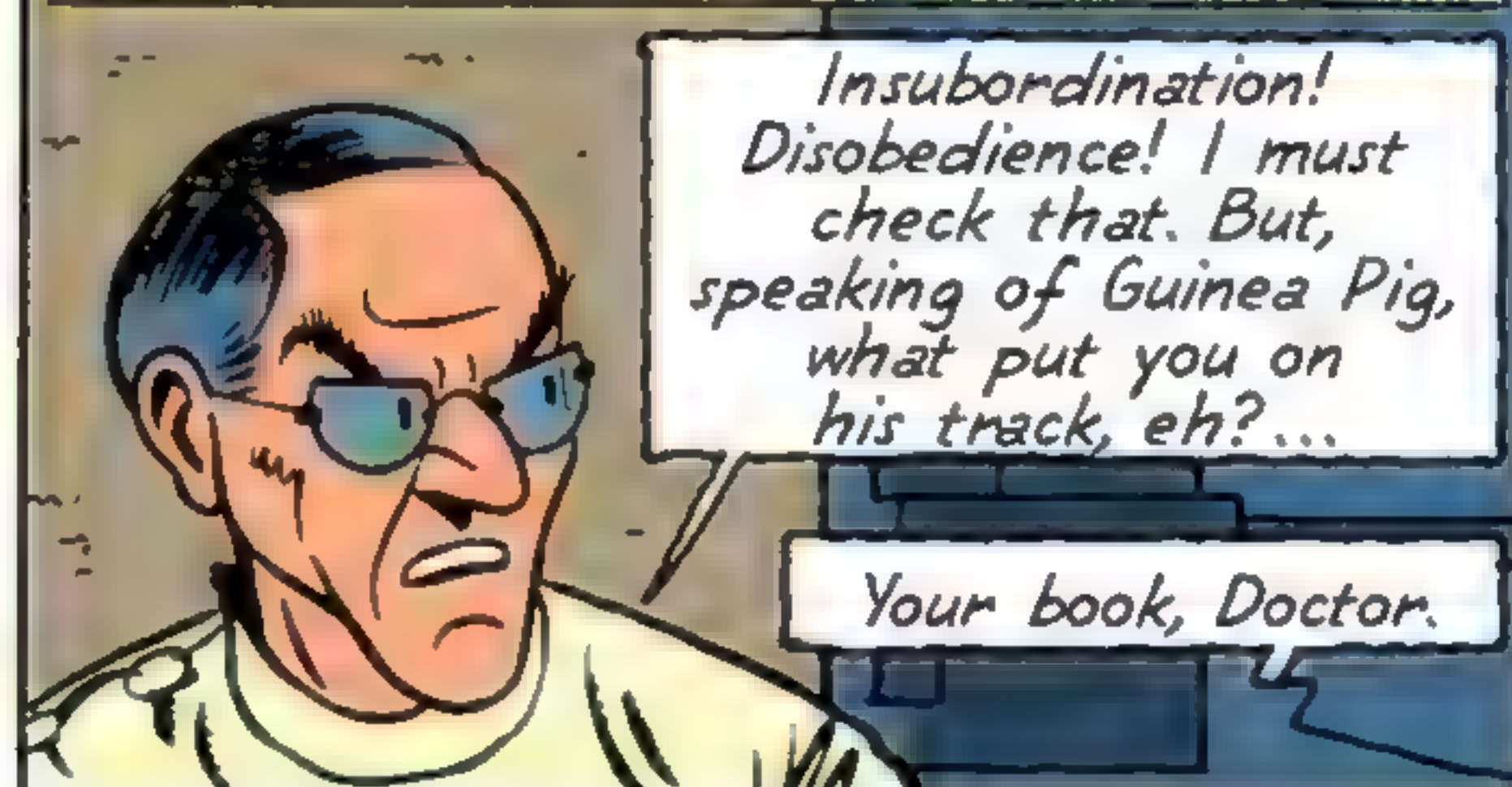


Guinea Pig!



You spying fiend! If I catch you prowling around here again...

SEPTIMUS RETURNS TO MORTIMER, MUTTERING, WITH A WORRIED LOOK ON HIS FACE.



Insubordination! Disobedience! I must check that. But, speaking of Guinea Pig, what put you on his track, eh?...

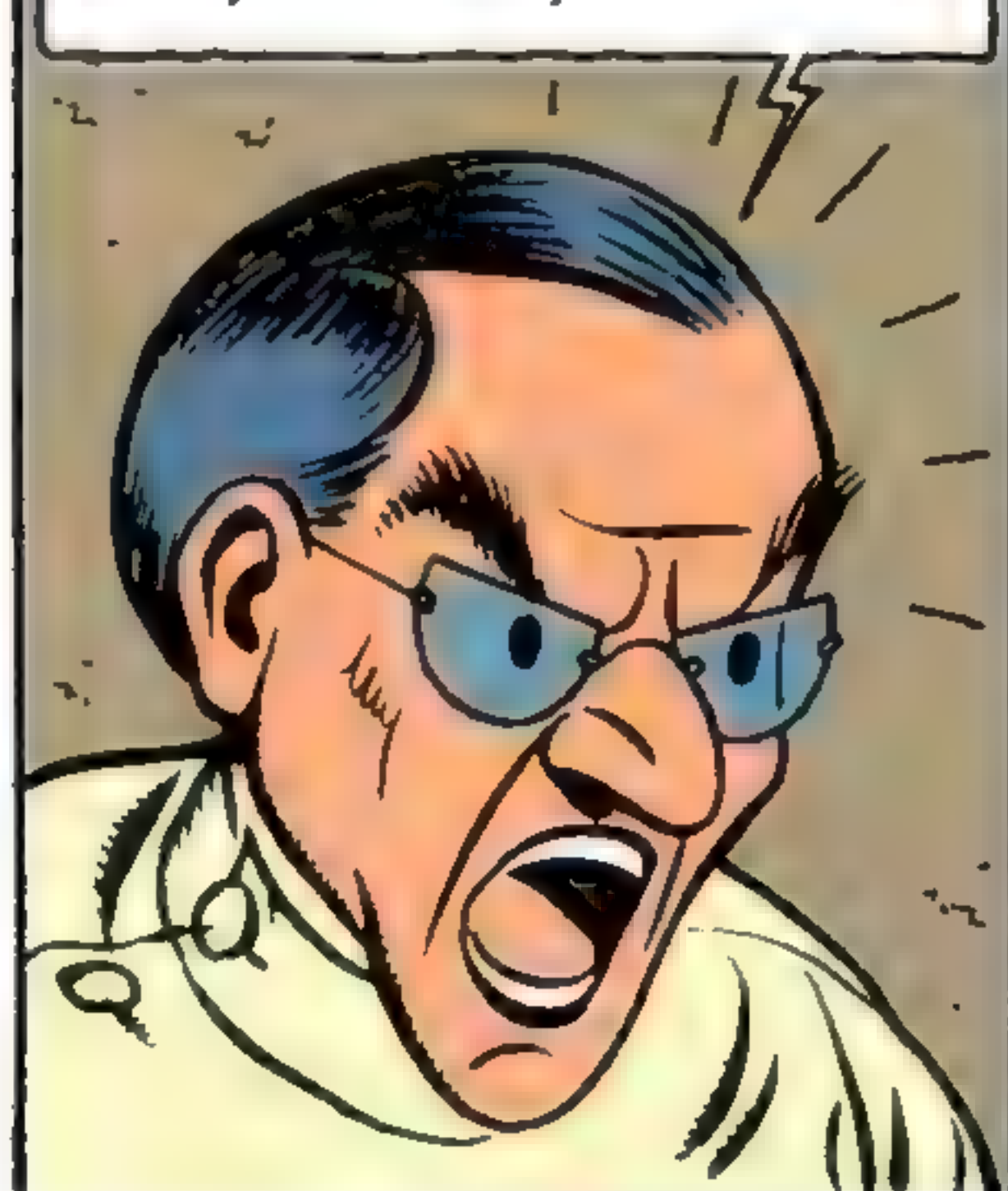
Your book, Doctor.

My book? What are you talking about? I did you out of the only copy still in existence at the British Museum!



Excuse me, but that's my business.

What? You too? Are you forgetting that you are talking to the famous Doctor Septimus? Just wait. I'm going to re-educate you too. You'll be like the others, my valet, my slave!!!



FOR SOME TIME, MORTIMER HAS BEEN WATCHING THE DOCTOR'S GROWING EXCITEMENT WITH UNEASE AND REALISES AT THAT MOMENT THAT THE MAN'S REASON IS AFFECTED...

Why, Septimus... You're completely mad!

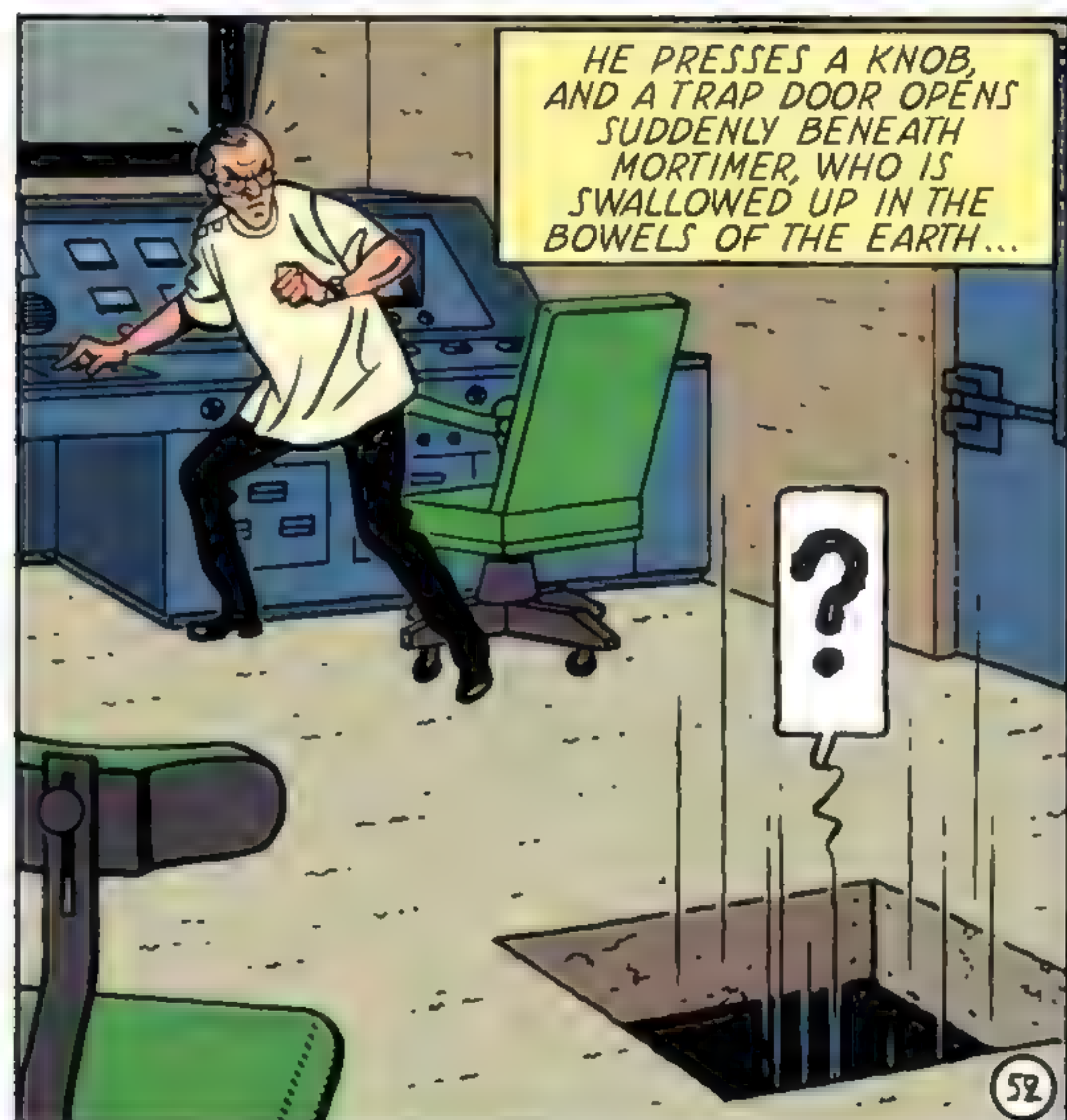


SEPTIMUS IS STUNNED FOR A MOMENT AND HESITATES, PALE WITH RAGE...

I? Mad? What cheek, blast you!



HE PRESSES A KNOB, AND A TRAP DOOR OPENS SUDDENLY BENEATH MORTIMER, WHO IS SWALLOWED UP IN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH...



THE SAME DAY AT SCOTLAND YARD. IT IS 8 PM. SIR CHARLES HAS SENT FOR INSPECTOR KENDALL.

So, still no news of the professor?

Alas, no, Sir. We have been everywhere and searched in vain. So far we have been able to conceal the news from the press. But they obviously suspect something, and...

THERE ARE THREE SHORT KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.

KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK

Come in!

BLAKE APPEARS...

Excuse my bursting in, Sir, but they told me that Kendall was here... And I have some news.

Quick! What is it?

Well, as you know, we learned from Mrs. Benson that Mortimer had received a visit from an unknown man some minutes before his phone call to the Yard and his sudden departure. Well, I've succeeded in identifying this person.

And?...

It's a Mr. Stone, the librarian at the Daily Mail. Of course he doesn't know about the professor's disappearance. It seems he had visited Mortimer with a book he had been looking for...

I don't see the connection...

Wait! Following certain deductions, Mortimer had reached the point of wondering whether there was some connection between the Yellow "M" and the parties in an old lawsuit about a book entitled, "The Mega Wave." To get to the bottom of the matter, he had been hunting for several days in the Daily Mail archives. The Yellow "M" knew of this and must have feared he would succeed, because he went as far as to steal the copy from the British Museum library. Now, it was precisely this unobtainable work that Mr. Stone had finally unearthed and brought to the professor.

From which you conclude that if Mortimer alerted Scotland Yard to stop the Limehouse Dock operation immediately, he had the book in his possession, and this held the key to the mystery.

Exactly.

Yes, but if the book has vanished at the same time as the professor, we are virtually no better off...

That is why, in my opinion, it is time to lift the ban on announcing Professor Mortimer's disappearance. Let's have a communiqué sent to the press, radio and television, as well as an appeal regarding the book in question...

What do you say, Sir Charles?

By George, you have made your case, and it costs nothing to try. Will you deal with it, Kendall?

Very good, Sir.

HALF AN HOUR LATER, IN A B.B.C. STUDIO...

Scotland Yard asks that this be given priority.

O.K. the present programme finishes in two minutes.

Before our next programme, here is a special announcement. We are asked by Scotland Yard to broadcast the following appeal:

A search is underway for Professor Philip Mortimer, who left his residence in Park Lane towards nine o'clock last night and has not been seen since. The professor was wearing a grey-green overcoat, brown trousers and a yellow scarf, but no hat. Here is a photograph of the missing man.

IN A LONDON PUB, THE CUSTOMERS WATCHING THE T.V. PROGRAMME LISTEN WITH SURPRISE TO THE SCOTLAND YARD COMMUNIQUE. AMONG THEM IS A SLIGHTLY INEBRIATED AMERICAN TOURIST WITH HIS ELBOW ON THE COUNTER.

Moreover, a sum of 500 pounds will be paid to any person bringing to the police a copy of a book entitled "The Mega Wave" by Dr. Wade. Here is the description...

500 pounds for an old book. They must be fond of literature in this country!...

BUT NOW A STRANGE THING HAPPENS. THE T.V. PICTURE IS SUDDENLY DISTORTED...

?

...Regular size
...Yellow paperback cover...

...AND ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THE VOICE BECOMES DISTORTED AND THE SCREEN IS COVERED WITH WAVY LINES...

...The price is... Bzzz... Scotland Yard attaches... Bzzz... Anyone who... Bzzz...

...And... bzzz... By the... Bzzz...

So this is British television? The technicians must be completely drunk. How disgusting!...

BUT AT THAT MOMENT, THERE APPEARS ON THE SCREEN, CLEARLY DEFINED, THE DREADED SINISTER SIGN, WHILE A DEEP, SARDONIC VOICE CLEARLY ARTICULATES THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

This is the Yellow "M" of London. I have borrowed the B.B.C. wavelength to announce that on the occasion of Christmas, and to provide you all with a salutary example, Professor Mortimer is in my hands and has been sentenced by me to capital punishment.

THE EXECUTION WILL TAKE PLACE BEFORE A COMMISSION AUTHORISED TO DRAW UP AN OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE CEREMONY.

?

?

?

?

THE AMERICAN LEAVES WITH GREAT CEREMONY BUT AN UNSTEADY GAIT, MAKING FOR A TAXI DRIVER SITTING A LITTLE FURTHER ALONG. THE TAXI MAN HAPPENS TO BE THE ONE WHO DROVE MORTIMER IN THE RECENT PURSUIT OF THE YELLOW "M"

Come on, old fellow. Let's go to another joint!...

Bzzz... Bzzz...

What, again? I was starting to forget about that unpaid fare.

AS ONE MIGHT IMAGINE, AFTER THE INITIAL BEWILDERMENT, THE B.B.C. HAVE ALERTED SCOTLAND YARD...

...Let it be perfectly clear...

Yes, yes, I'm listening... Hurry!...

SOON THE VARIOUS SURVEILLANCE POSTS IN THE CAPITAL TRANSMIT THEIR OBSERVATIONS TO THE CENTRAL POST AT SCOTLAND YARD.

You do understand, Captain Blake, that it is absolutely useless to try to thwart my plans?

This is Paddington Post Azimuth 342ND. Signal received 160 M.V. Over.

...Understood. Chief Inspector Kendall?...

Hallo, Kennington Post. Azimuth 342ND. Signal received. M.V. All right. Hallo, Hoxton Post Azimuth 250TH. Signal received. 180 M.V. All right.

That's all for today! Goodnight all!

Curse it! He stopped!

Useless... This goes like that...

ON THE PLOTTING TABLE, THE OPERATOR POINTS WITH HIS FINGER TO THE TRIANGLE FORMED BY THE INTERSECTION OF THE RULERS.

It's here... in this triangle!

THE SAME EVENING, A LITTLE BEFORE MIDNIGHT, MORTIMER HAS BEEN DROPPED INTO THE PADDED CELL WHERE SEPTIMUS IMPRISONED OLRİK AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS TREATMENT, WHEN HE WAS BEING PREPARED FOR HIS FUTURE ROLE. MORTIMER SITS IN GLOOMY MEDITATION...

There's no denying it: I'm in a rotten mess...

FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME HE REEXAMINES HIS CHANCES...

Let's see. One thing is certain. Septimus doesn't know that Guinea Pig is, in reality, the famous adventurer Olrık. That's a trump card for me. In fact, each time that he has been sent on one of these missions against Blake or myself, there have been changes in his behaviour. That proves that part of his subconscious escapes control by the doctor. If, then, I succeeded in awakening his memories, I might succeed in controlling his mind and...

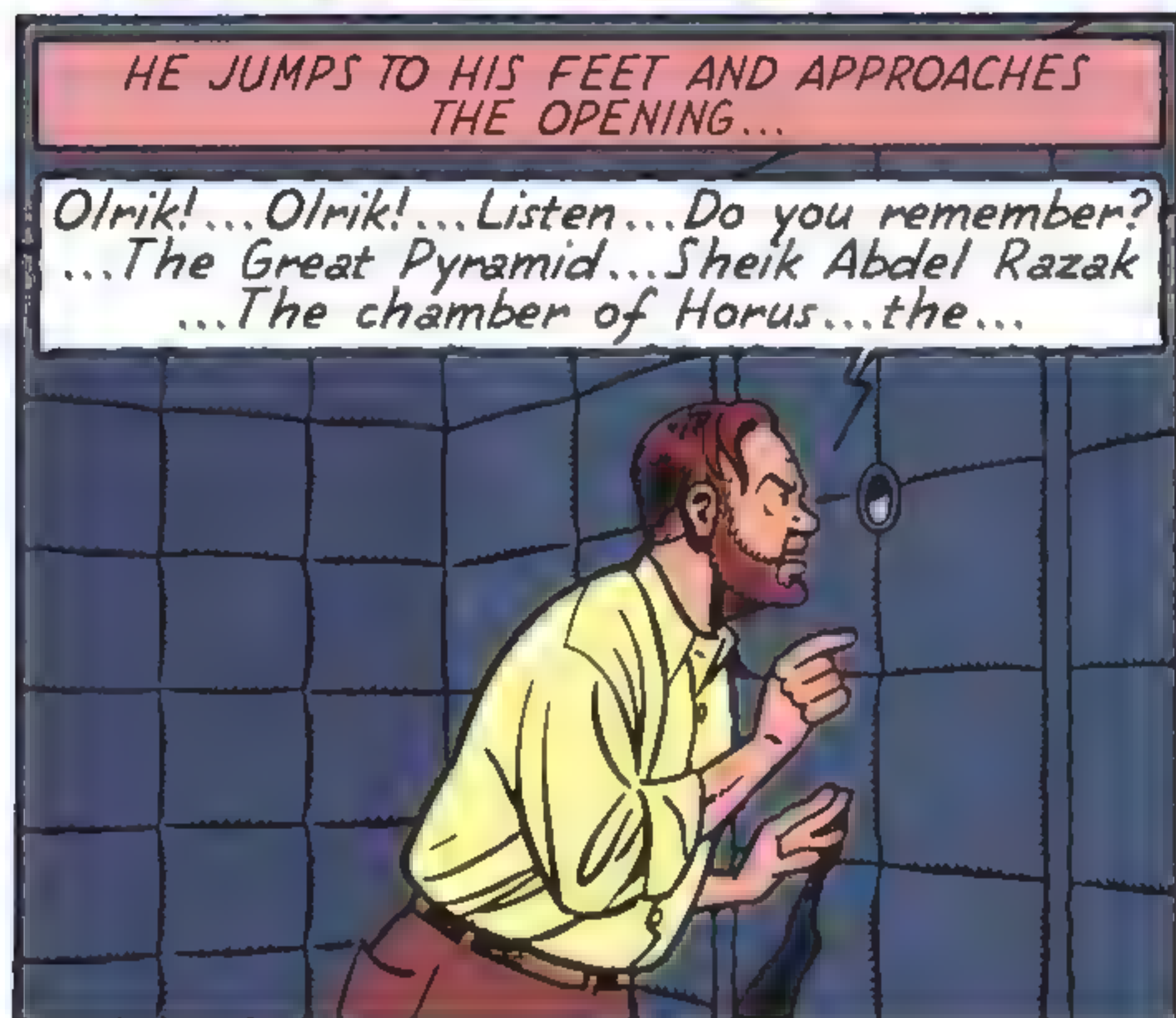
AT THAT MOMENT, A FAINT CLICK INTERRUPTS HIS REFLECTIONS...

CLICK!

THE SPY HOLE HAS OPENED, AND AN EYE WITH A STRANGE LOOK APPEARS IN THE OPENING...



Guinea Pig!!! It's now or never to try the experiment!



HE JUMPS TO HIS FEET AND APPROACHES THE OPENING...

Olrık!... Olrık!... Listen... Do you remember? ...The Great Pyramid... Sheik Abdel Razak ...The chamber of Horus... the...

BUT A FURIOUS VOICE RESOUNDS IN THE CORRIDOR, AND THE SPY HOLE CLOSSES QUICKLY...

Guinea Pig! Where are you then?!

Bad luck. Seemed to be making a good start...



MEANWHILE, THE INSOLENT APPEARANCE OF THE YELLOW "M" ON TELEVISION HAS UPSET THE PUBLIC. THE PRIME MINISTER IS WORRIED AND HAS DECIDED THAT THE MATTER MUST BE BROUGHT TO AN END. FOR THIS PURPOSE, HE HAS CONVENED THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND SEVERAL TOP MEMBERS OF SCOTLAND YARD.



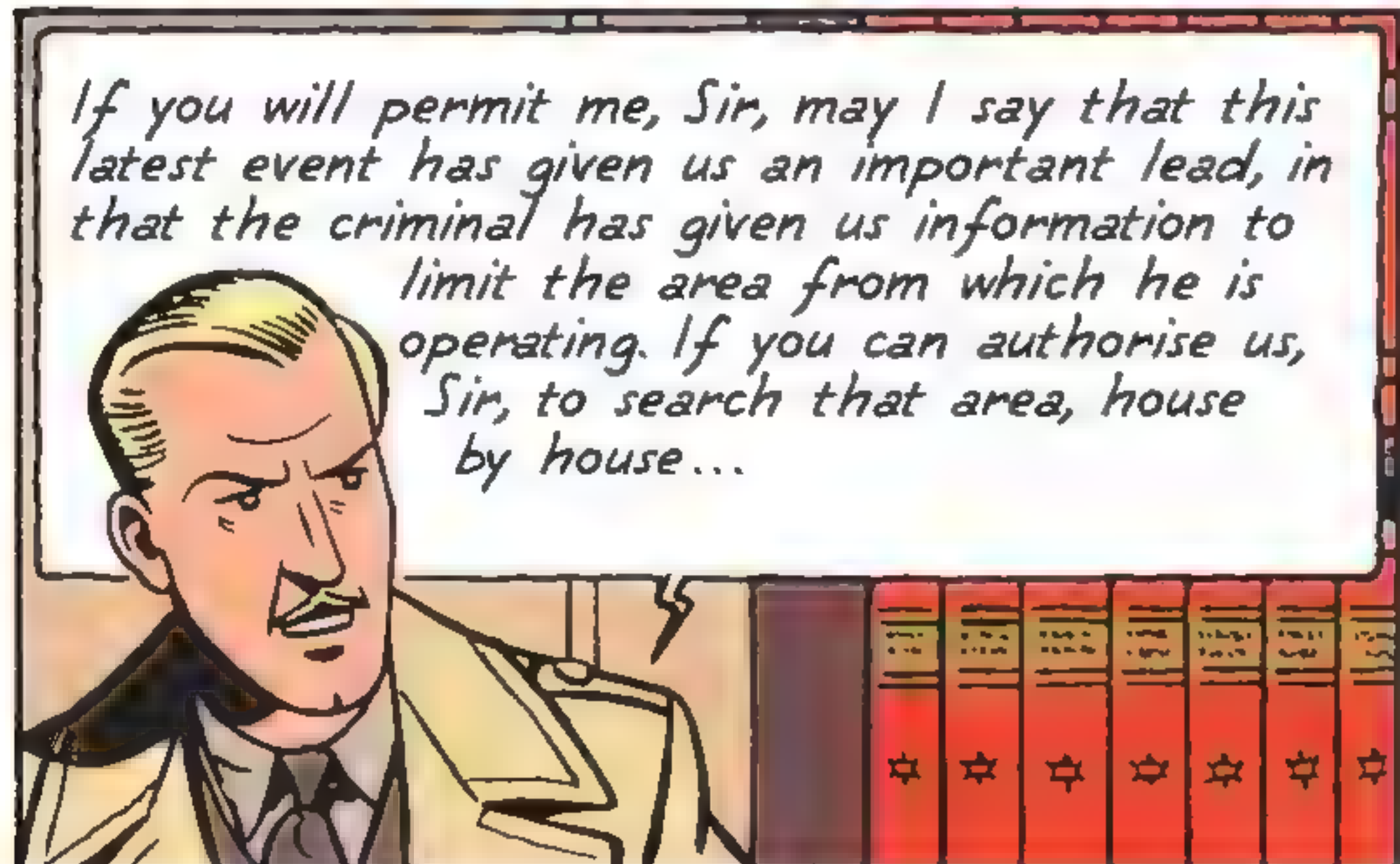
A meeting at dead of night. I think it's going to be a stormy session.

Well, Kendall, we shall see...



A LITTLE LATER...

But the B.B.C. affair is the last straw. From tomorrow the entire press will conduct a general offensive. That is why, gentlemen, I am waiting for you to put an end to this intolerable situation. Let us hear, then, what you suggest?...



If you will permit me, Sir, may I say that this latest event has given us an important lead, in that the criminal has given us information to limit the area from which he is operating. If you can authorise us, Sir, to search that area, house by house...



Well, that's a procedure to which British people are hardly accustomed. But exceptional circumstances call for exceptional remedies. So, carry on. I'll cover you. But you must succeed. Otherwise, I don't give two pence for my government's chances...



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

Well, if we fail now, I don't give two pence for my chances of staying on as Chief Inspector!...

Let's not get pessimistic. Rather, let's think of establishing our plan of action.

IN THE EARLY HOURS, TO THE GREAT ASTONISHMENT OF LONDONERS, THE POLICE HAVE EMBARKED ON A METHODICAL SEARCH OF THE BLOOMSBURY DISTRICT UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF INSPECTOR KENDALL.



*STREET OF LONDON WHERE SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS ENGLISH DOCTORS RESIDE

A FEW SECONDS LATER, THE SPY HOLE OPENS AND THE SARCASTIC EYE OF SEPTIMUS APPEARS.

Good day, Professor. Please forgive my apparent lack of hospitality towards a guest of your standing, but I have been very busy the last few hours, all the more because our good friend Blake has been redoubling his efforts to find you. So, to make you more patient, I have brought you this...

A SMALL SHELF OPENS IN THE BOTTOM OF THE DOOR, AND A TRAY OF FOOD IS PUSHED INSIDE.

THEN THE DOCTOR CONTINUES...

I advise you to do justice to this little lunch. You will need it. You can put your mind at ease. The food is not poisoned.

You really are too kind, you old wretch.

THE OLD WRETCH CLOSES THE SPY HOLE IN HIS FACE AND, TURNING A HANDLE NEAR THE DOOR, MURMURS...

You are preparing for some desperate action, my fine friend. We know you. But my soothing gas will make you as harmless as a lamb.

AT THAT MOMENT, AT THE OTHER END OF THE CITY, THE TAXI DRIVER DICK WE LAST SAW IN A BAR WITH AN AMERICAN TOURIST, IS SLEEPING LIKE A LOG...

THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

BANG BANG

Yeah?

THE LIGHT GOES ON, AND ONE OF HIS MATES BURSTS INTO THE ROOM...

What, are you on strike? They'll be ringing the bells for you... Especially as you haven't brought the car back.

Oh, my head! Don't shout like that! An American took me on a pub crawl... supposed to be cheering me up...

What was that for?...

For my bad luck with a bloke not paying with 27 bob on the clock, besides his offer of £50 for catching a car we were chasing. The car smashes itself against a bus, and this 'ere bloke runs off without paying! I tried to catch him, but no go. Then the Yank takes me in tow and I can't get rid of him!

HE GRABS THE PAPER AUTOMATICALLY. HE HAS SCARCELY LOOKED AT THE PICTURE...

Good heavens, it's him, it's him! My bloke with a beard!

Blimey, don't get excited about your £50. You can win £500 if you can find this fellow with a beard, or his book. Look at this...

With a beard?

LIKE A MADMAN, DICK JUMPS OUT OF BED!

HE LEAPS UP AND GRABS HIS OVERCOAT AND CAP...

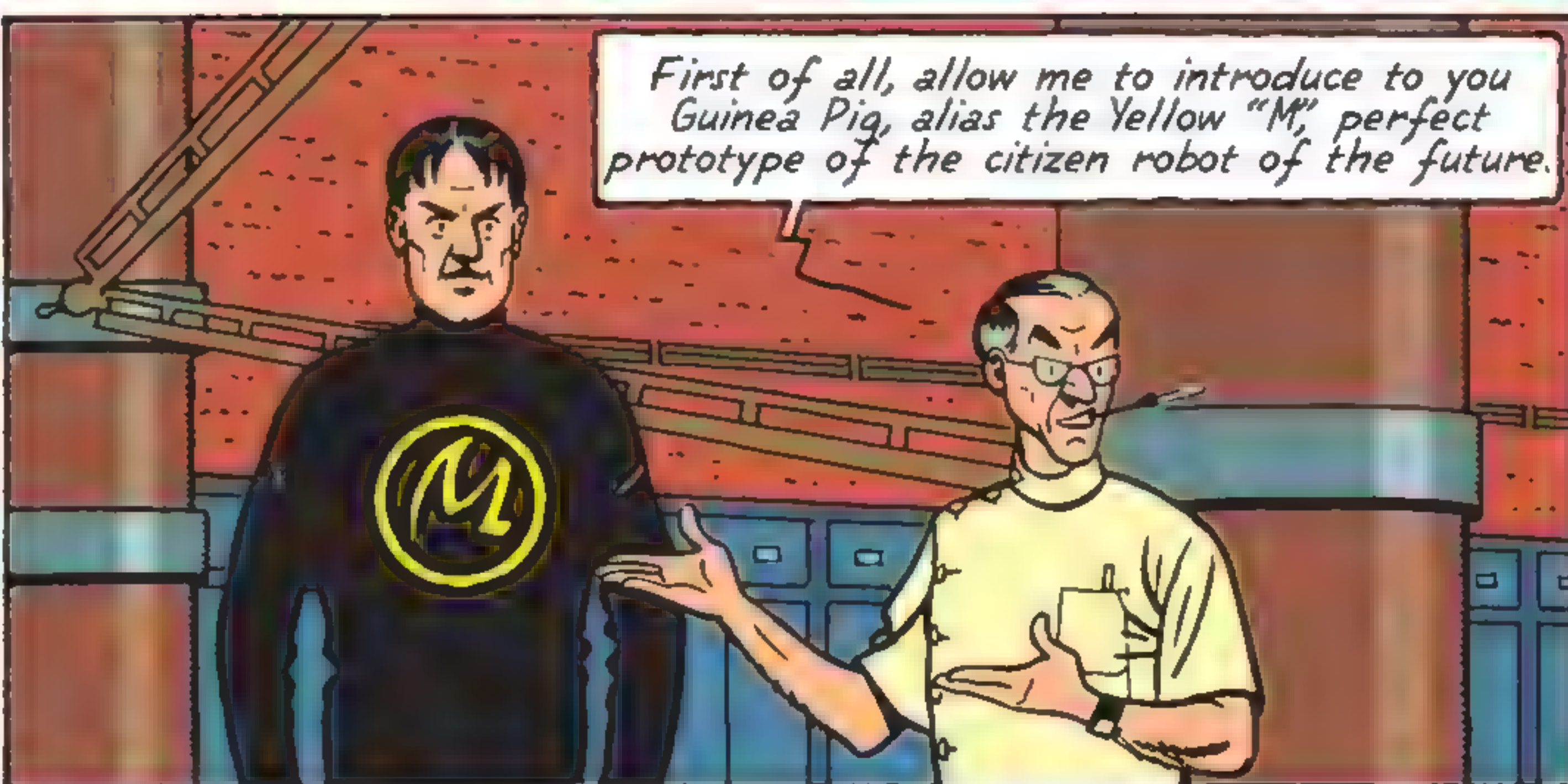
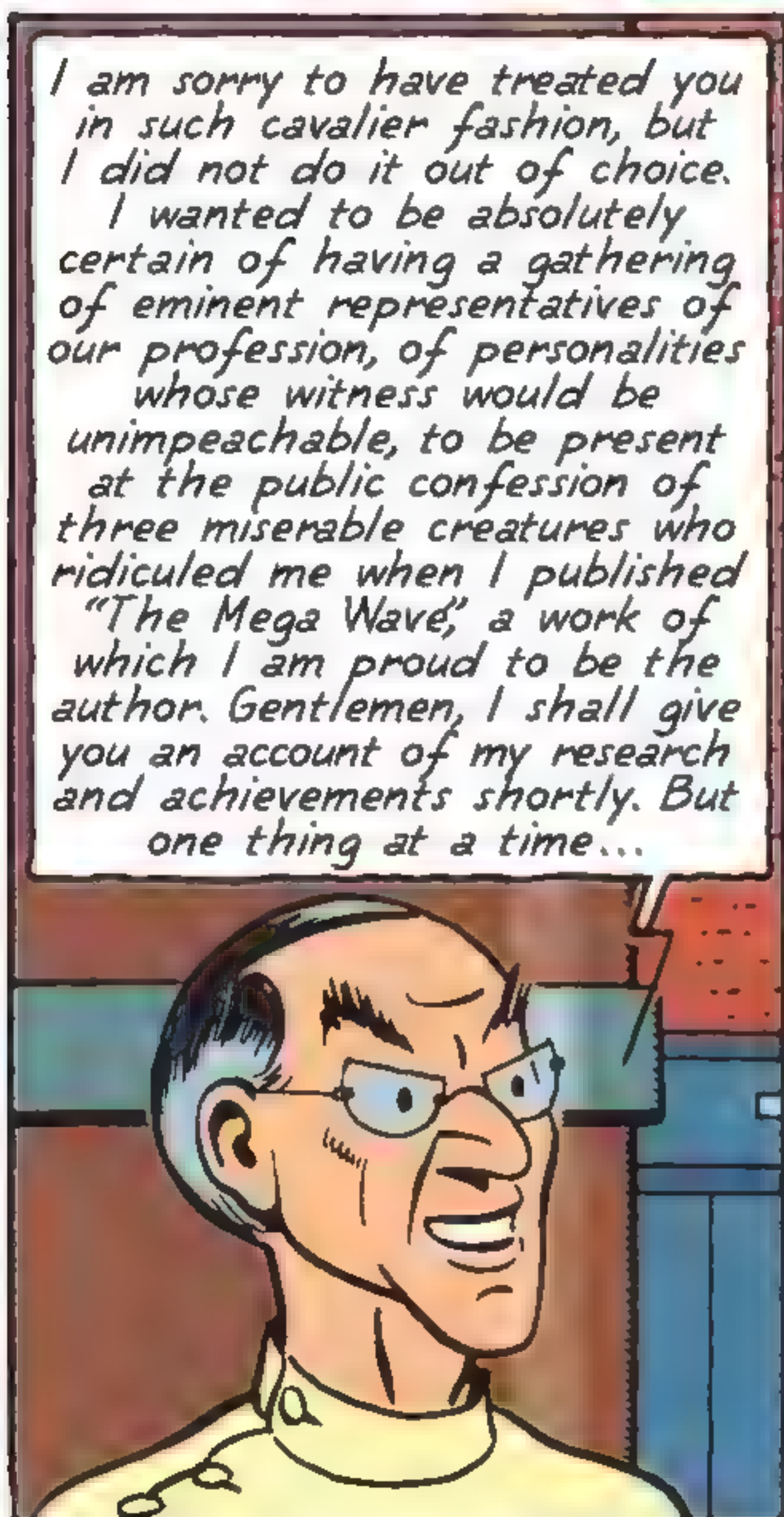
PUSHING HIS MATE ASIDE, HE RUSHES DOWNSTAIRS.

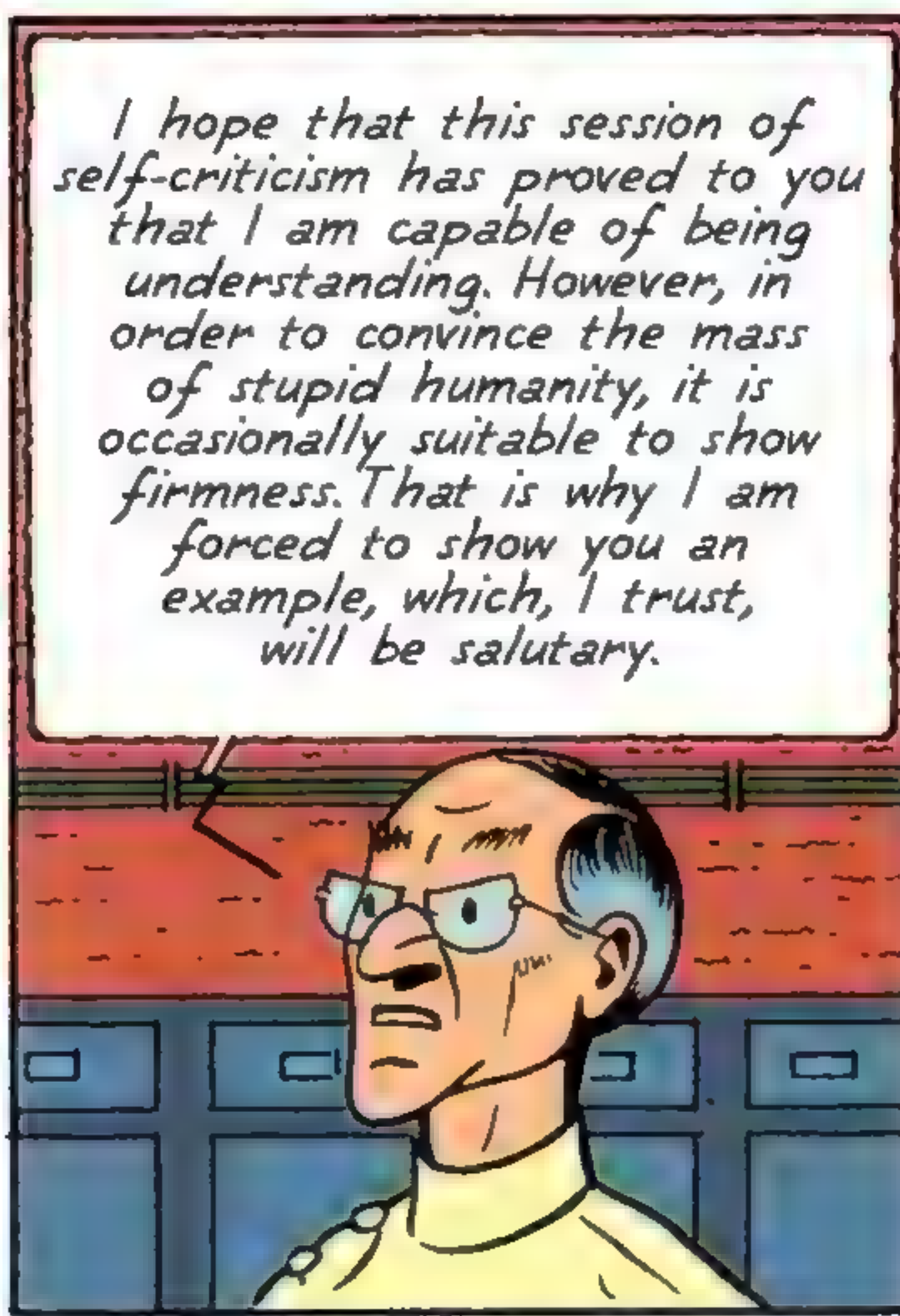
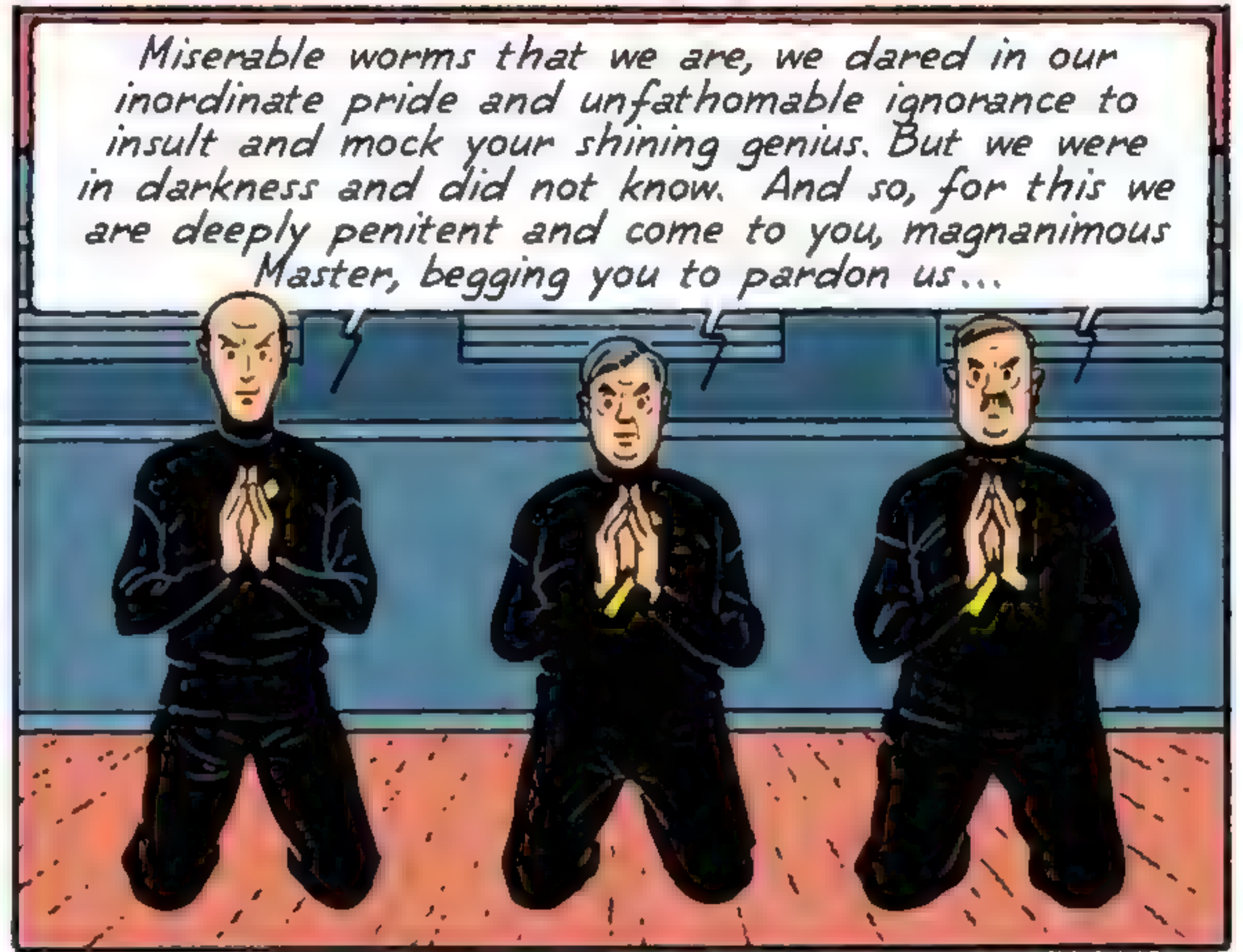
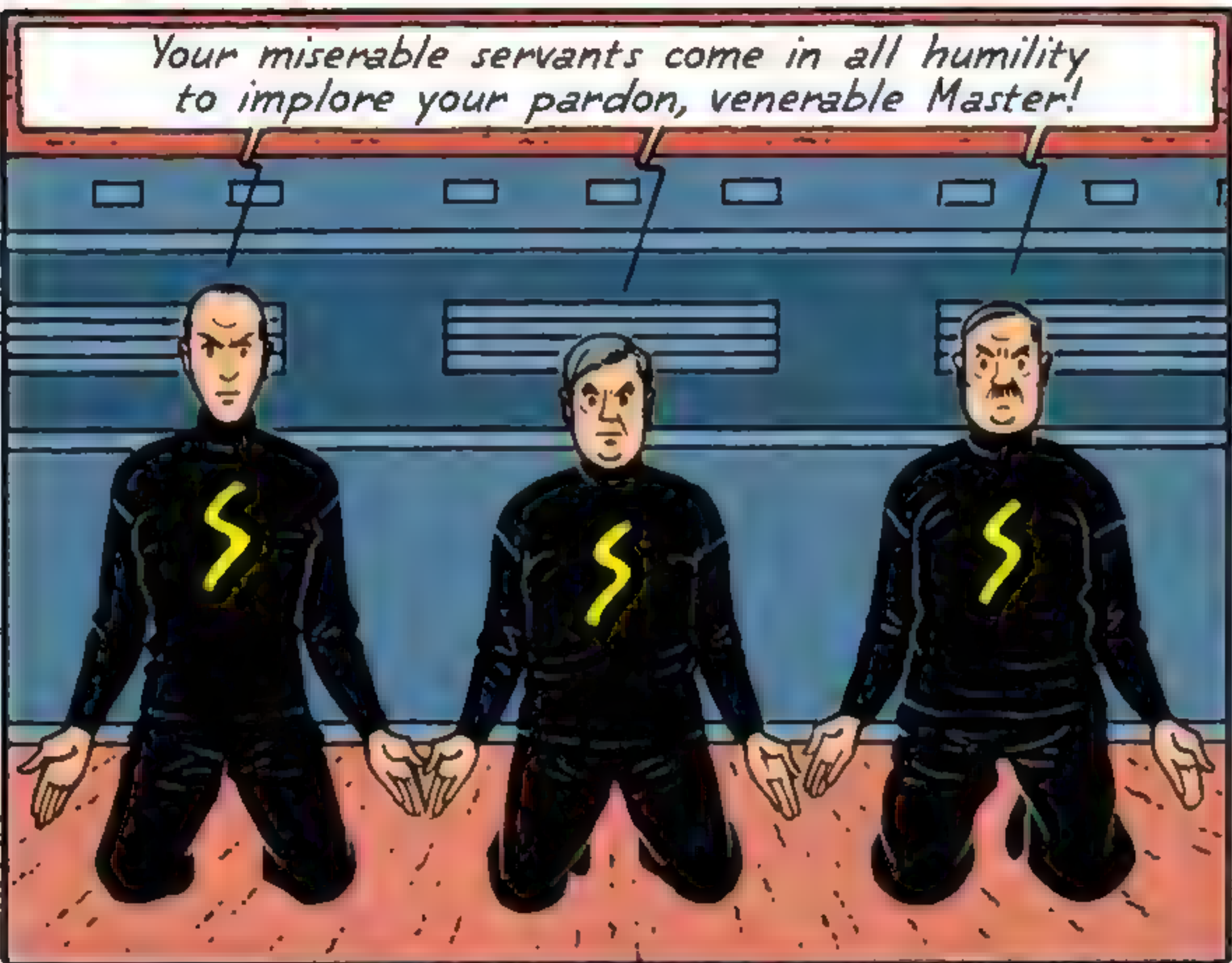
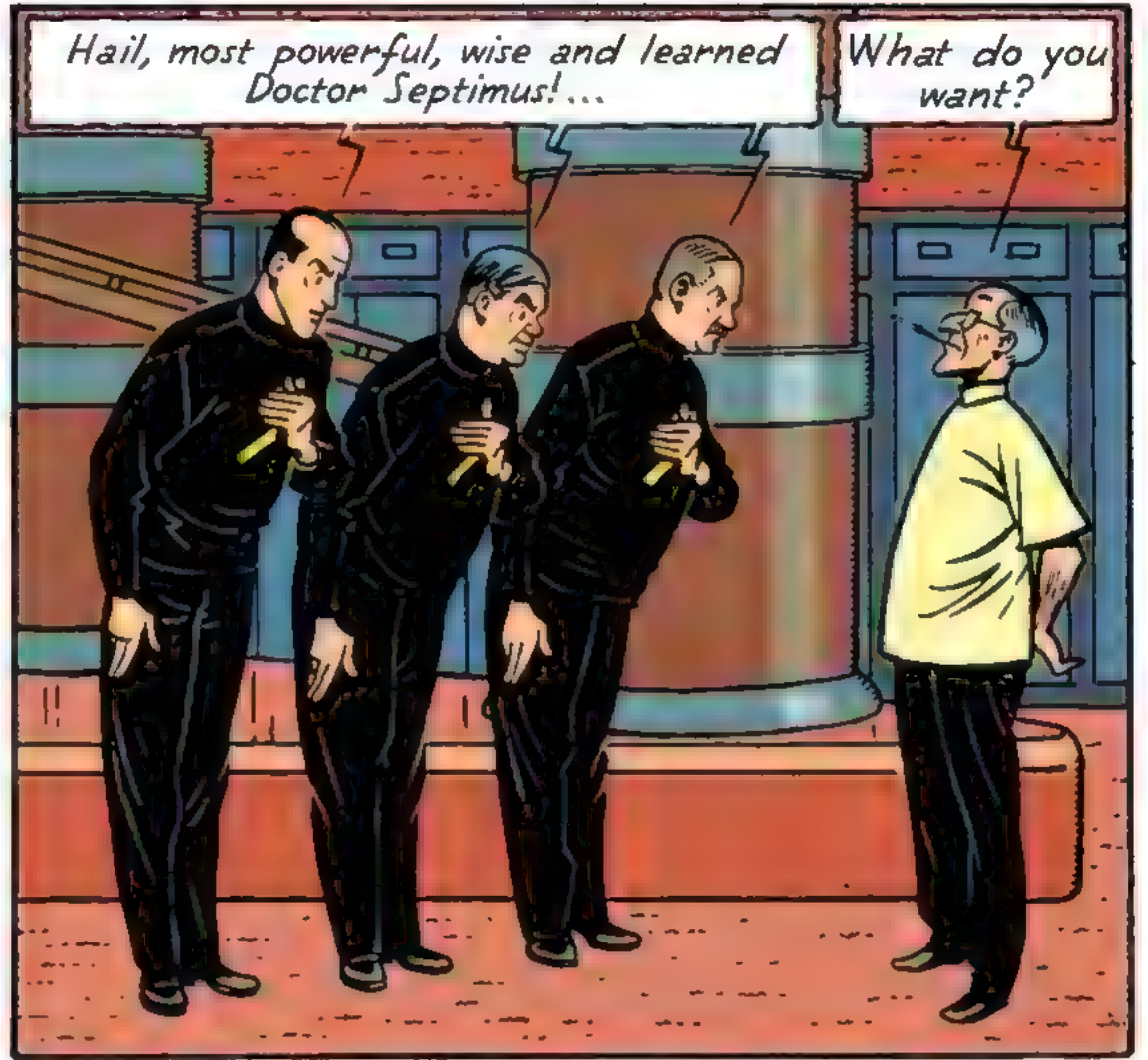
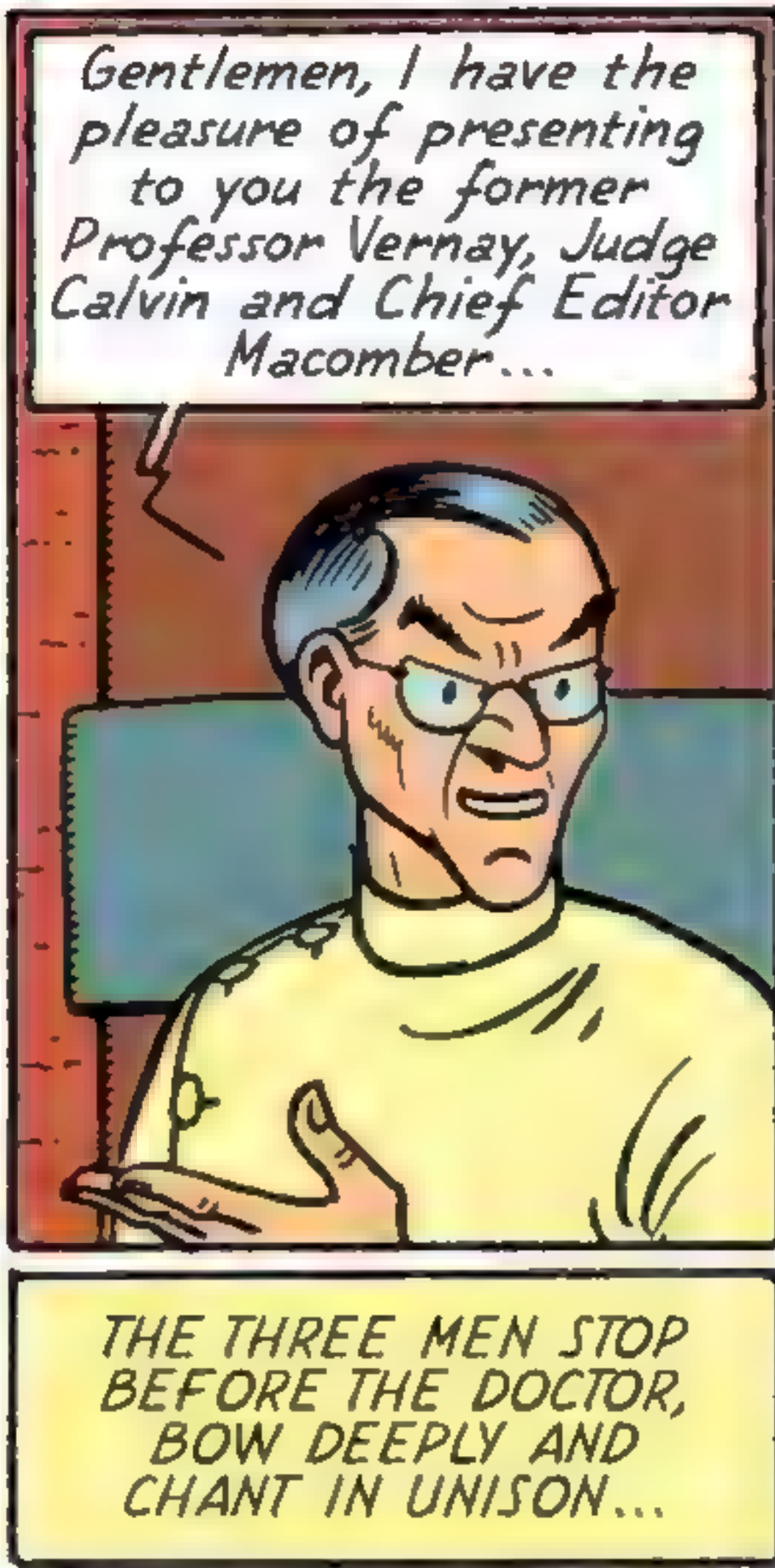
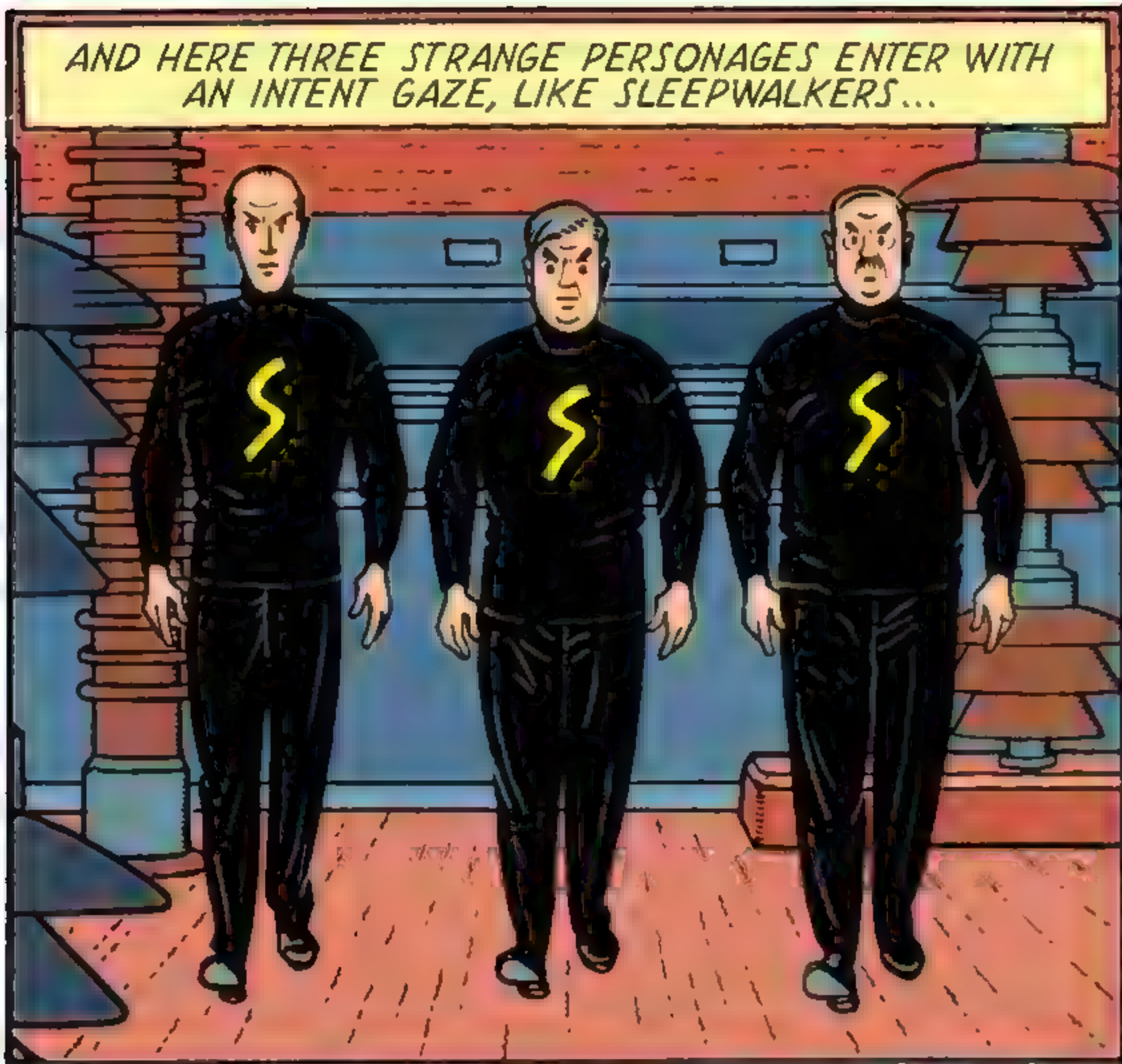
Dick! Wait!...

£500!

Blimey, don't get excited about your £50. You can win £500 if you can find this fellow with a beard, or his book. Look at this...

With a beard?





AS 11 O'CLOCK CHIMES FROM BIG BEN, BLAKE AND KENDALL LEAVE SCOTLAND YARD...

Everything is lost this time. I think I've reached the end...

We've still got an hour... Who knows what it may bring.

AS THE TWO MEN REACH THE CORNER OF CANNON ROAD, IN FRONT OF THE TEA SHOP FREQUENTED BY POLICE FROM THE YARD, THEY OVERHEAR A FRAGMENT OF CONVERSATION.

Of course, half a dozen loonies came to the Yard with so-called first-class tips about Mortimer's disappearance. They even had to shove one into the jug who showed up in pyjamas!

Ha ha! Unbelievable!

RESOLVED TO SEIZE ON THE REMOTEST CHANCE, BLAKE QUESTIONS THE POLICE OFFICER.

Hallo, Clover! What did the man want?

Well, he was a taximan, completely drunk, who was talking about a professor and his book. He's in the station opposite.

We've nothing to lose. Suppose we go and question this man?

If you insist...

A MINUTE OR SO LATER AT THE POLICE STATION...

And stop pushing me around, can't you? You won't catch me trying to help the police again!

Calm down, please. Just tell your story to these gentlemen.

Look here, my friend. Cheer up now. I'm a personal friend of Professor Mortimer, and I give you my word that if you give us some valuable information, I'll pay you the amount of the reward myself. So then?...

Oh, ah! Under those conditions...

DICK GIVES BLAKE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF HIS ADVENTURE WITH MORTIMER AND THEIR PURSUIT OF THE YELLOW "M"...

And the point is: I'm sure I came here with the book, which I found in my taxi. Yes, Sir, I put it in my overcoat pocket!

Sergeant, let me have this coat...

Certainly, Sir. But I assure you that it was empty. We searched it.

What, me? Never. Not a word. Do you understand? Not unless they give me the reward. I've already been swindled by the man with the beard, so that's quite enough!

A bearded man?

It's true. There's nothing in the pockets...

Hey, just a second. There's something down here inside the lining!

FEVERISHLY, BLAKE PLUNGES HIS HAND THROUGH A TEAR IN THE LINING AND PULLS OUT THE LOST BOOK!

Here we are!

Great Scott! If we have to read all that to find out the name of the culprit, it will be too late!

BLAKE HUNTS QUICKLY THROUGH THE BOOK FOR THE INDEX, WHICH SHOULD PROVIDE A CLUE TO THE MYSTERY. SUDDENLY...

Here's a dedication: "To the eminent scientific reporter..." Heavens, Kendall, look at that!...

ON THE FLYLEAF OF THE BOOK IS A DEDICATION IN A BROAD, FIRM HANDWRITING...

To Mr. Macomber
renowned scientific reporter of
the Daily Mail
from the author
John Wade

THE MEGA WAVE

By Jove, it's Septimus's handwriting!
But what about the Yellow "M"?

Now everything makes sense! Septimus
must be the brains behind it all, and
Guinea Pig, his mysterious servant,
the one who carries it out. Quick!
To Tavistock Square!



AT THAT MOMENT, OLRİK HAS SWITCHED ON
THE PURIFIER TO CLEAR AWAY THE SOOTHING
GAS, AND GOES INSIDE TO MORTIMER, WHO LIES
MOTIONLESS ON THE GROUND...



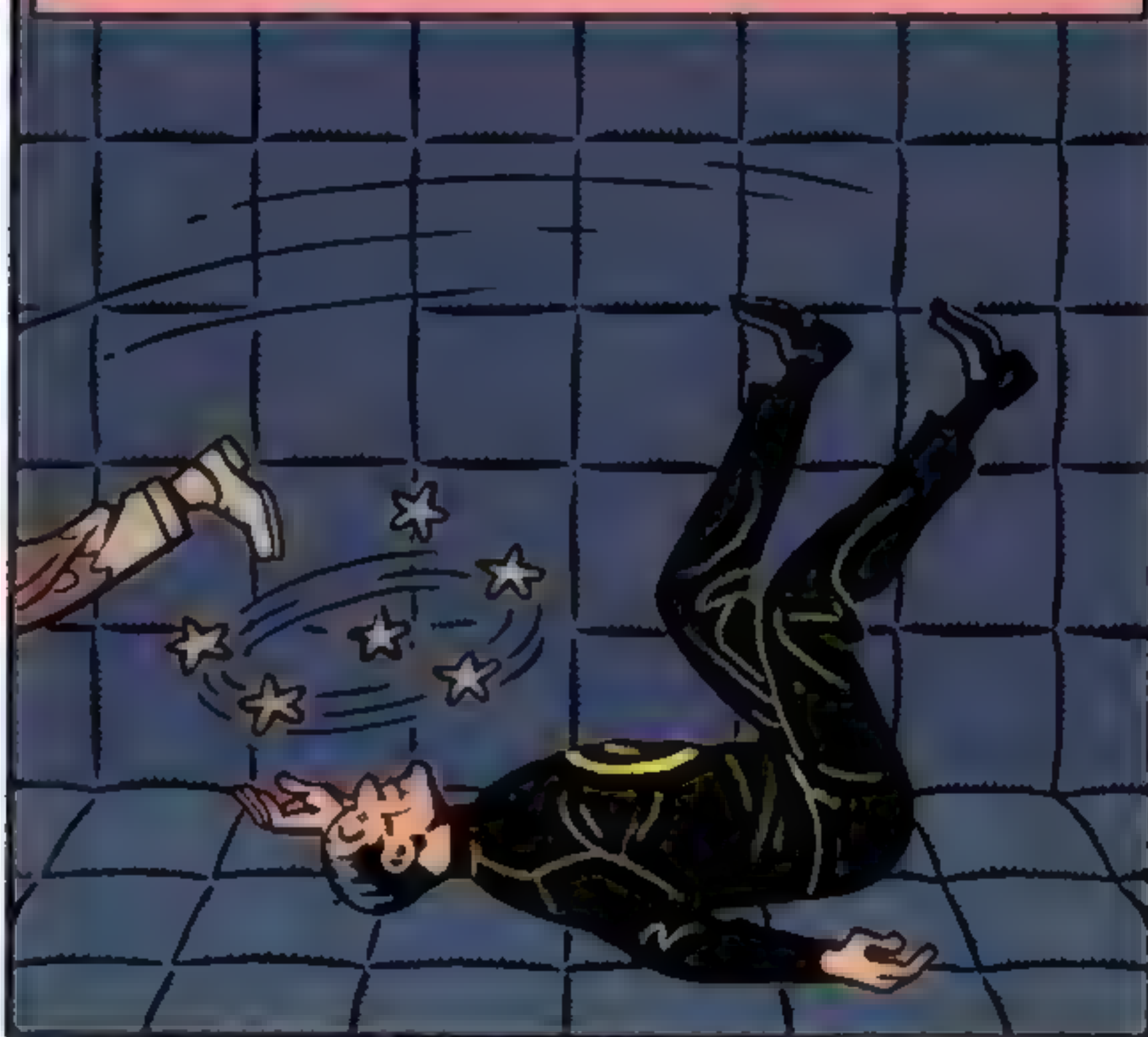
OLRİK APPROACHES SLOWLY, BUT AS
HE BENDS OVER THE PROFESSOR...



...HE SUDDENLY RECEIVES A MASSIVE KICK, DELIVERED
WITH TERRIBLE FORCE, RIGHT ON HIS JAW!



WHILE OLRİK CRUMPLES UNDER THE BLOW,
MORTIMER JUMPS TO HIS FEET AND FLIES
TOWARDS THE DOOR.



HE LEAPS OUTSIDE AND SLAMS
THE HEAVY STEEL DOOR.

Ha! You haven't caught
me yet, you bounders!



THEN, WITHOUT LOSING A SECOND,
HE RUSHES TO THE STAIRCASE...

And now, this is serious!



... AND COMES OUT INTO A PASSAGE.

Nobody there...



THERE IS A HALF-OPEN
DOOR, WHICH HE PUSHES
CAUTIOUSLY...



AND RECOGNISES THE CONTROL
ROOM, FROM WHICH HE WAS
DROPPED INTO THE CELL.

It may be my only chance.
If I could manage to communicate
with the outside...



JUST AT THAT INSTANT, THE POLICE VEHICLES STOP OUTSIDE
SEPTIMUS'S HOUSE.

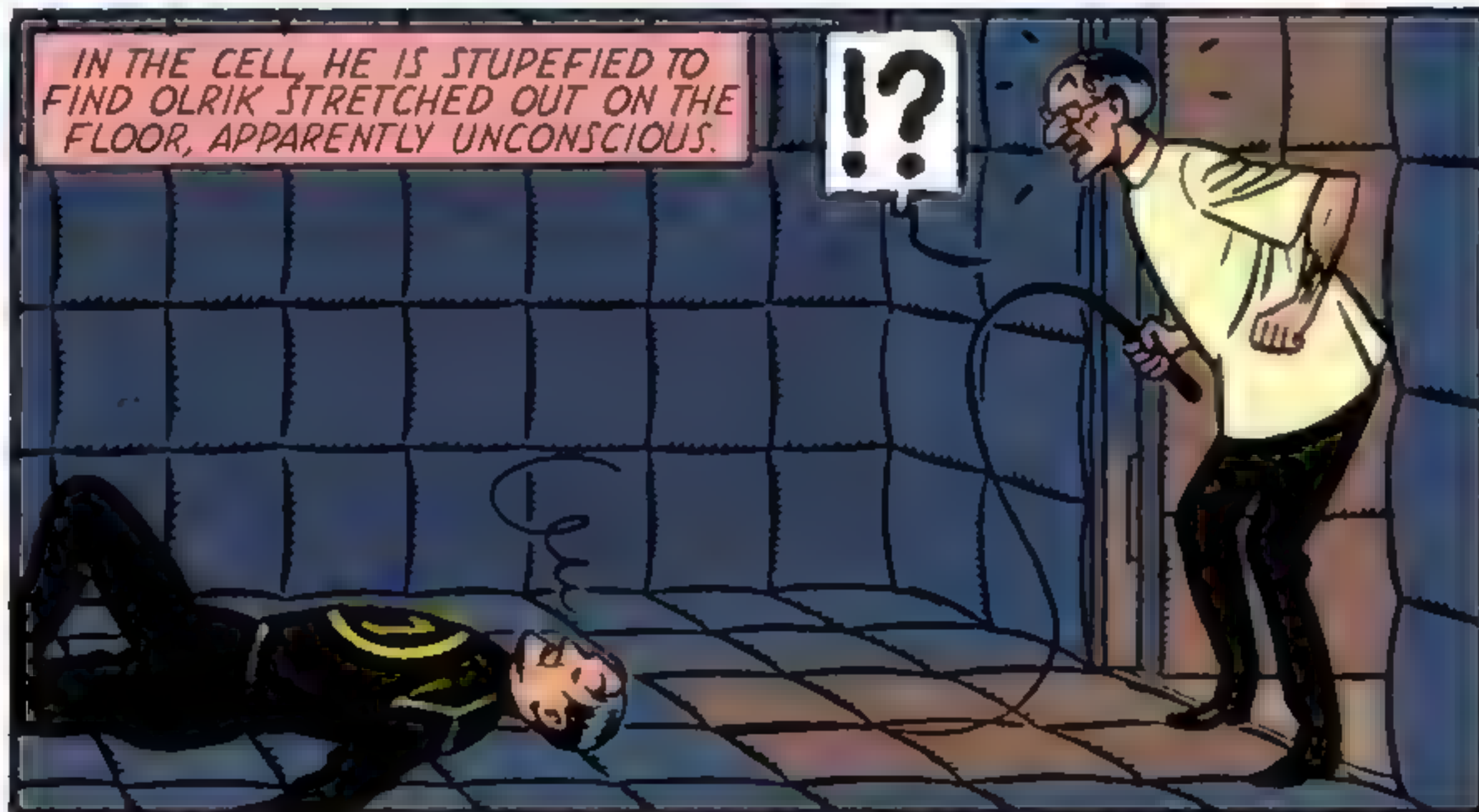
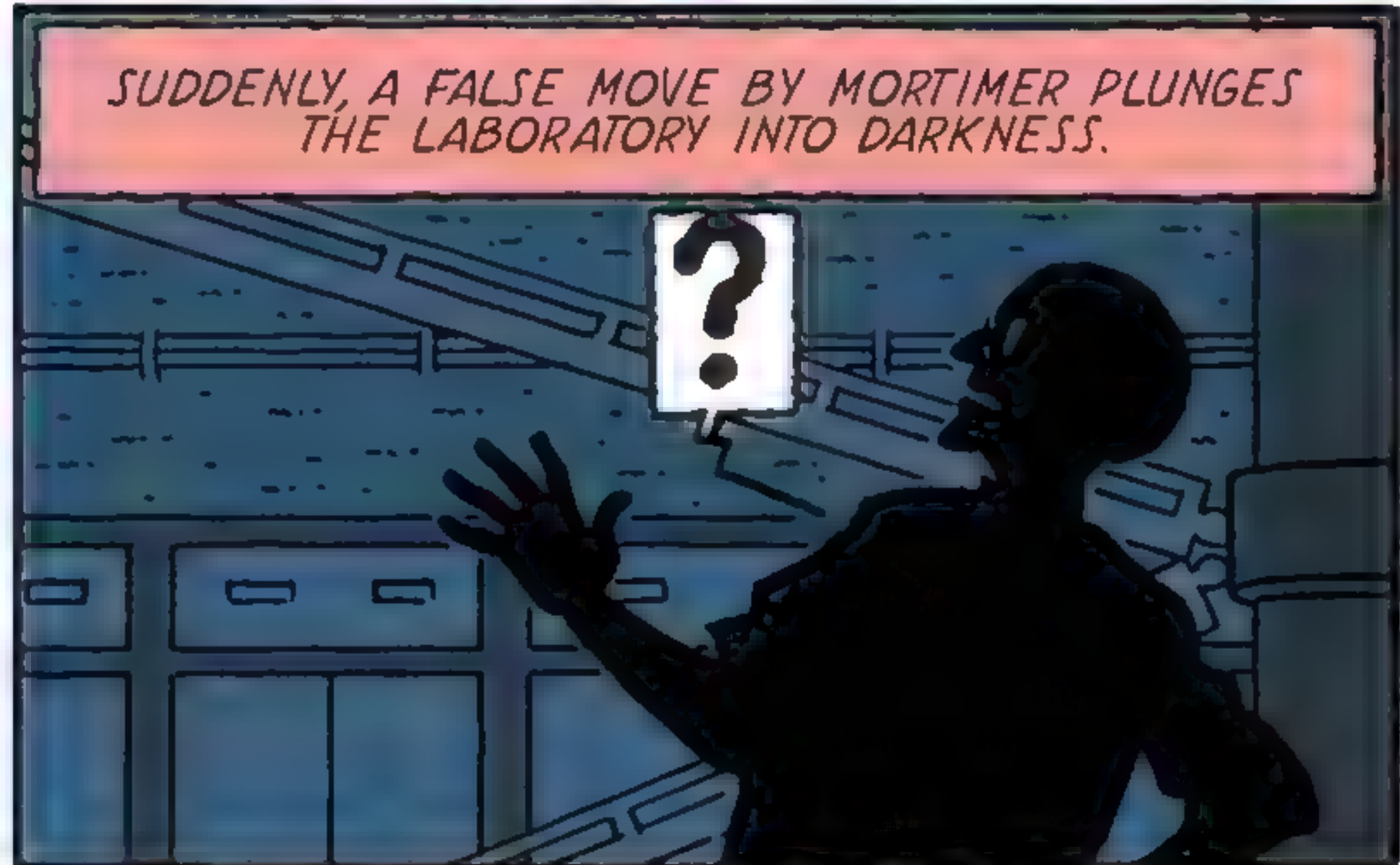
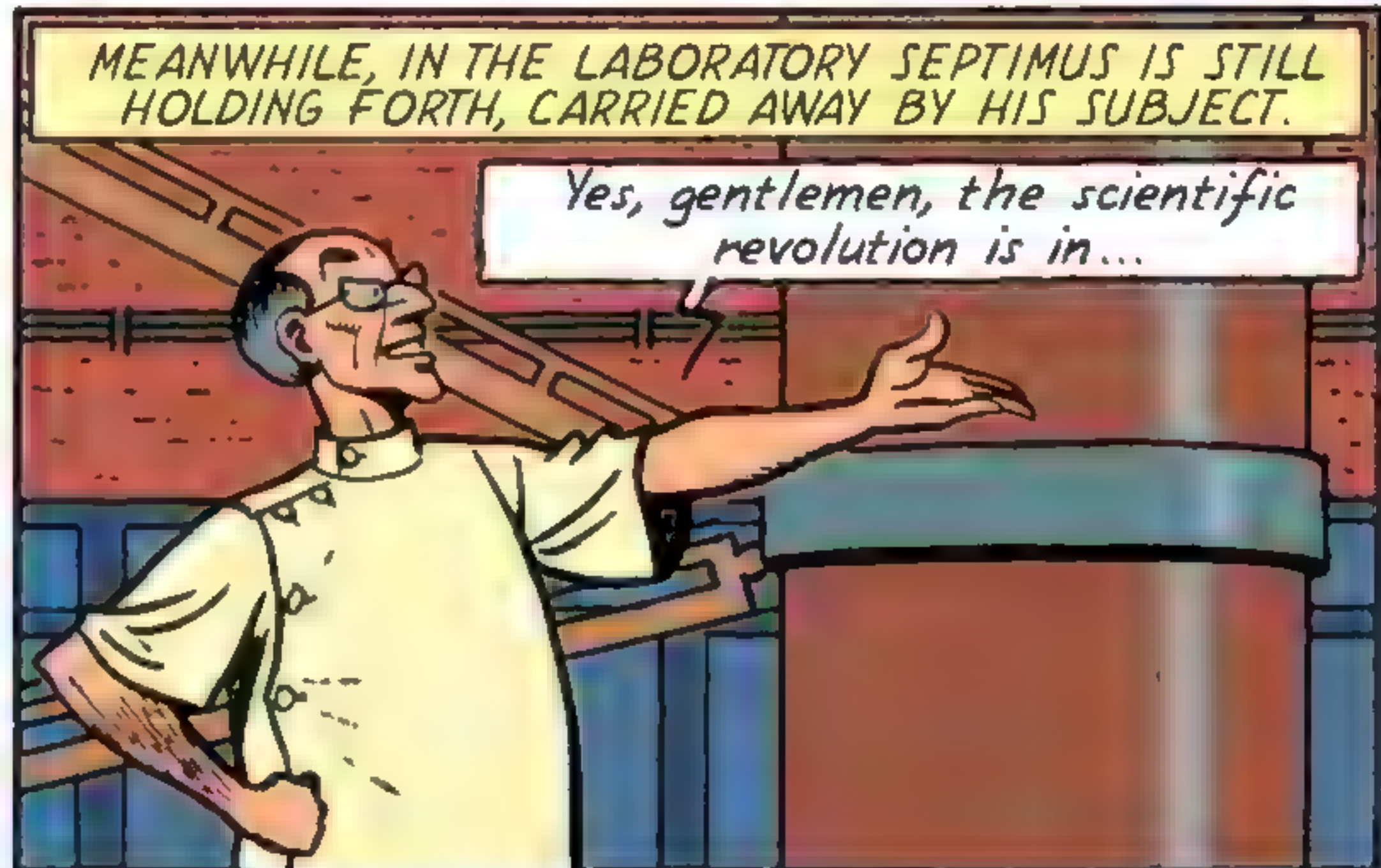
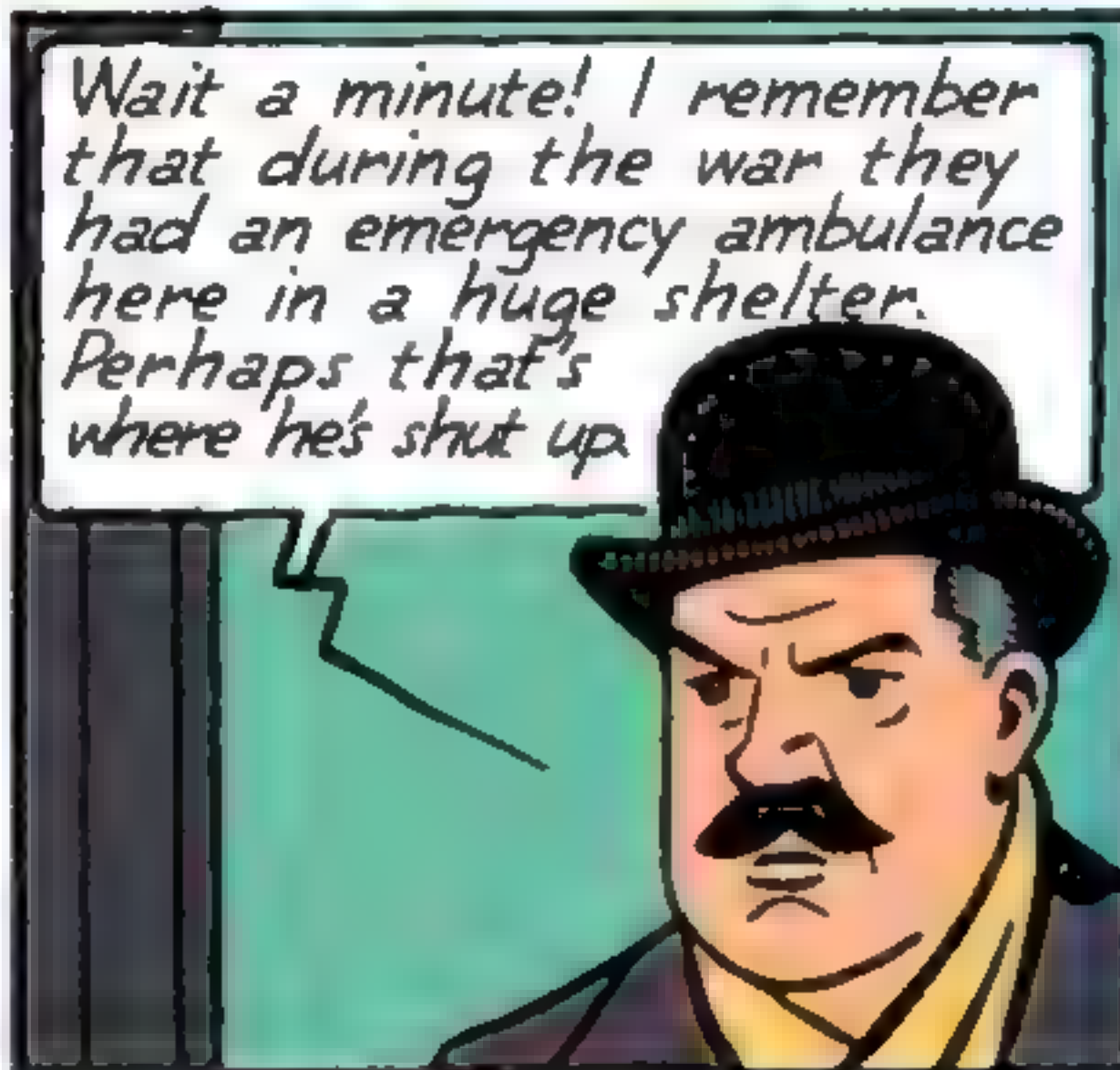
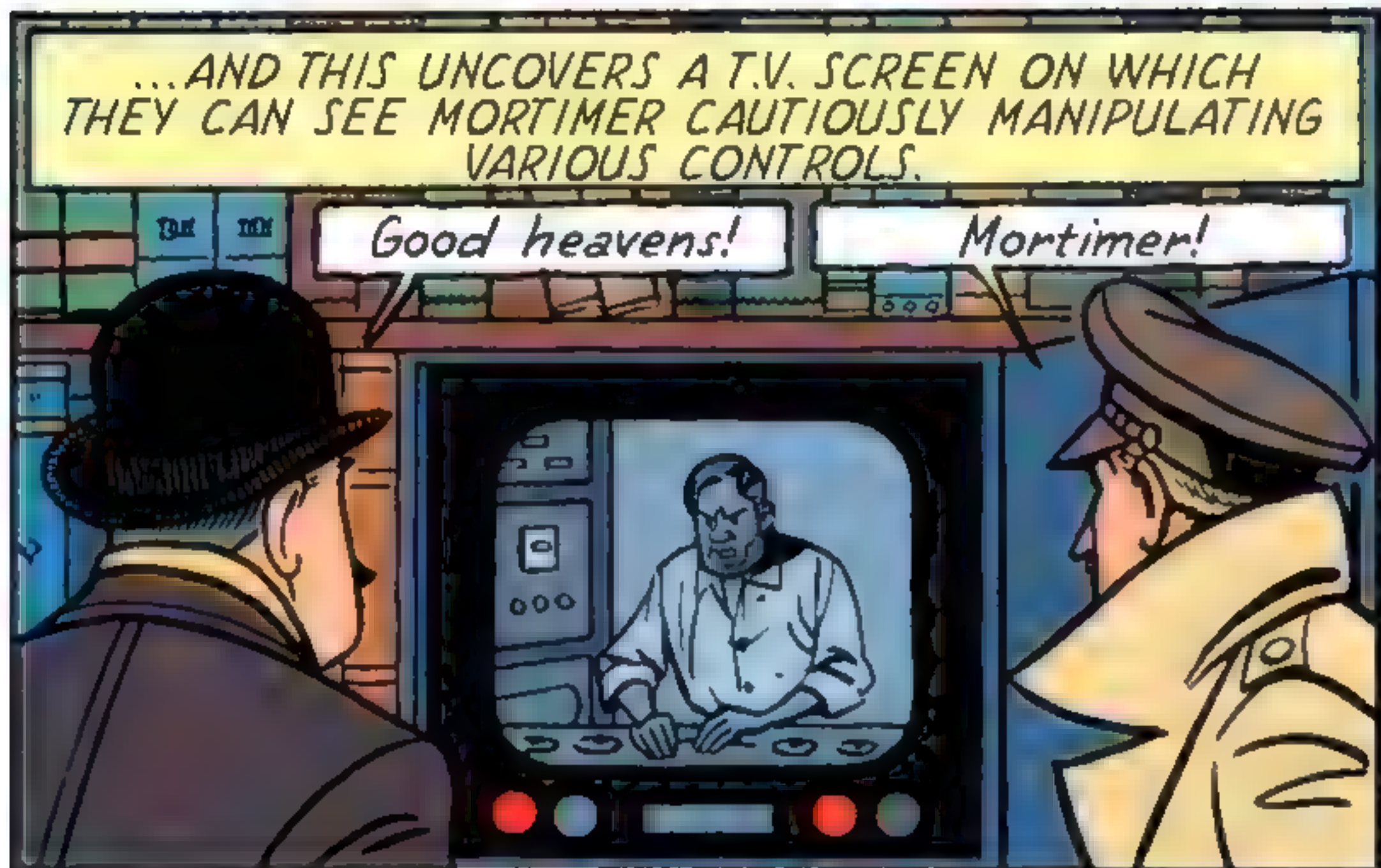
Come on! Go to it! Break down
the door if necessary!

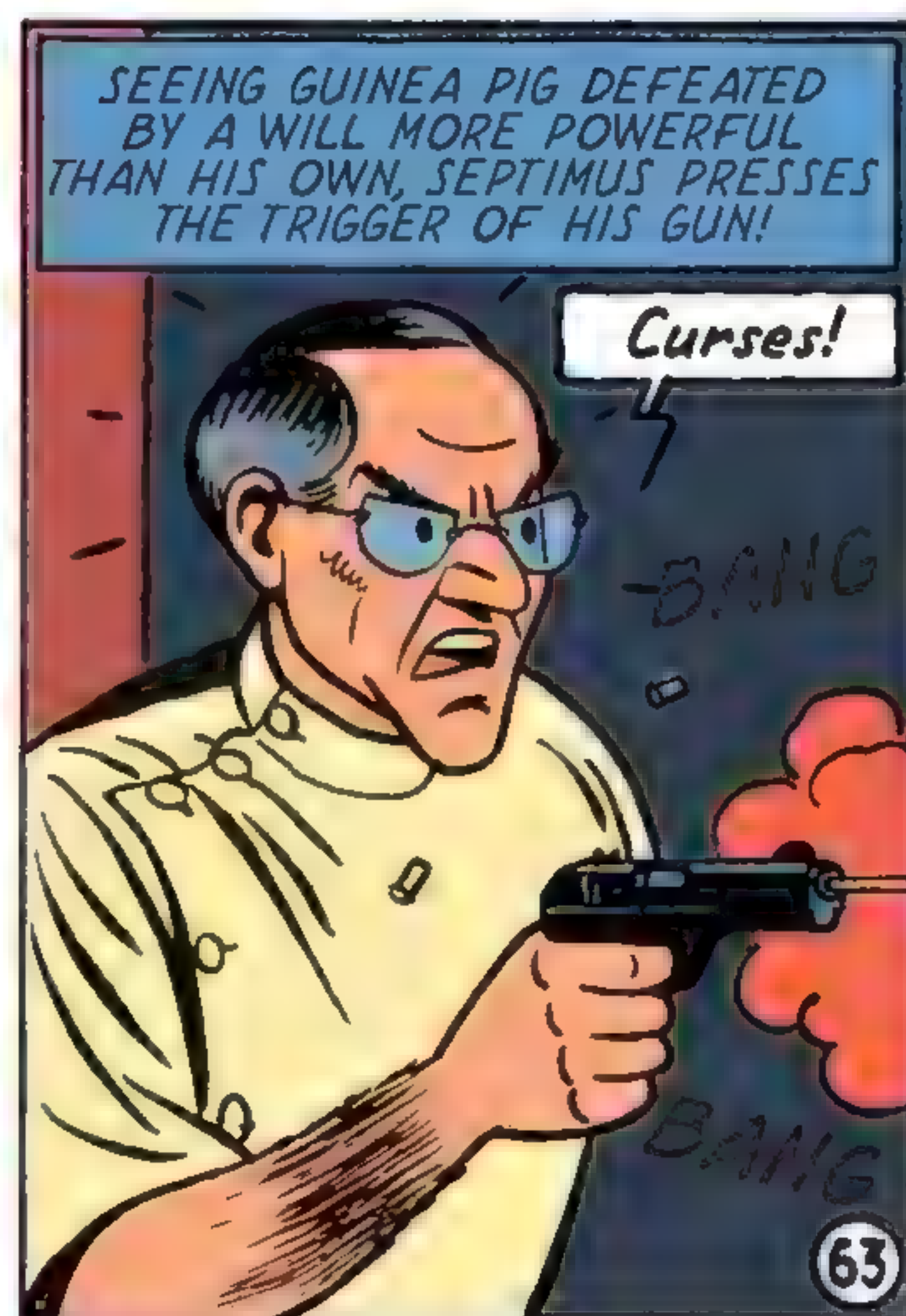
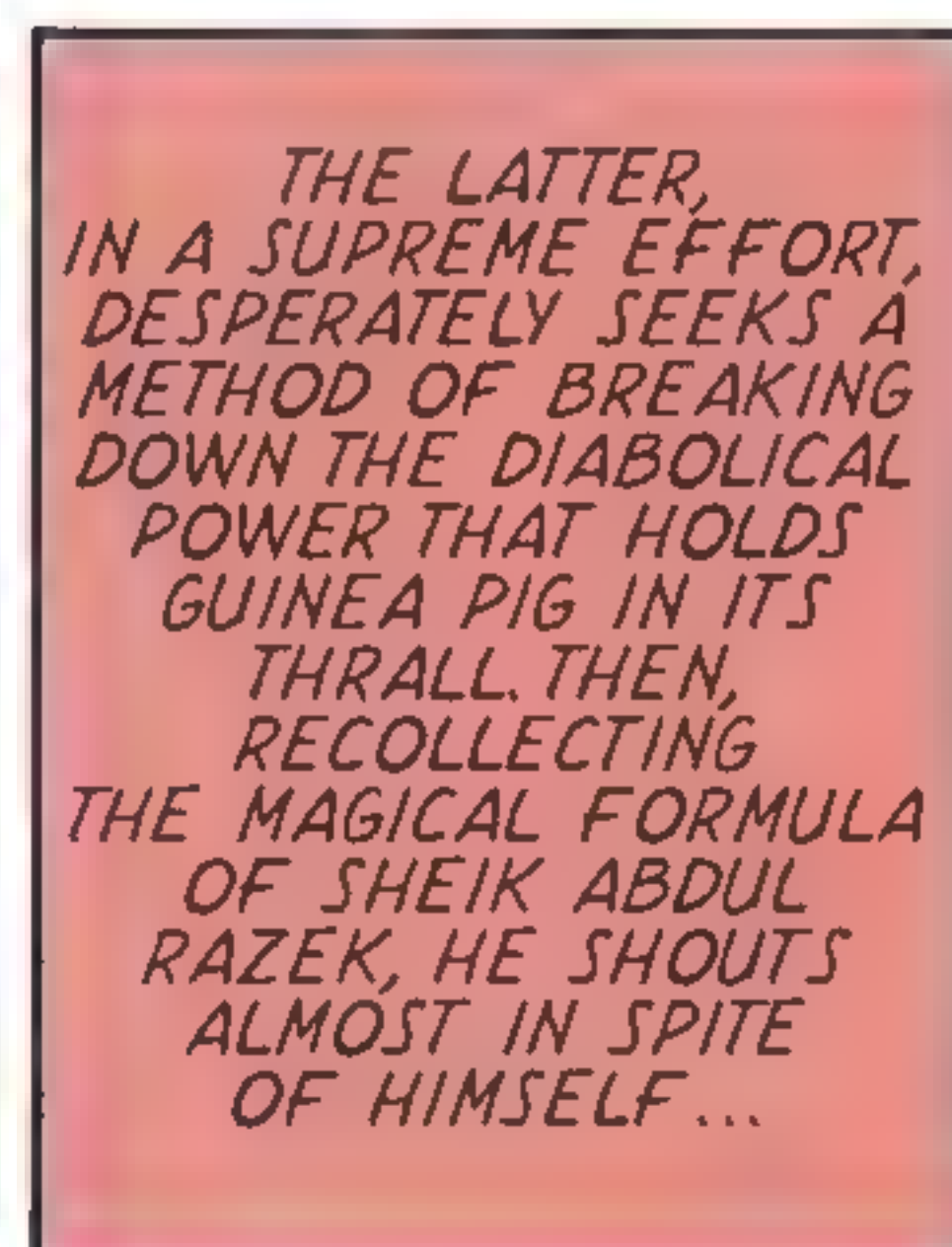
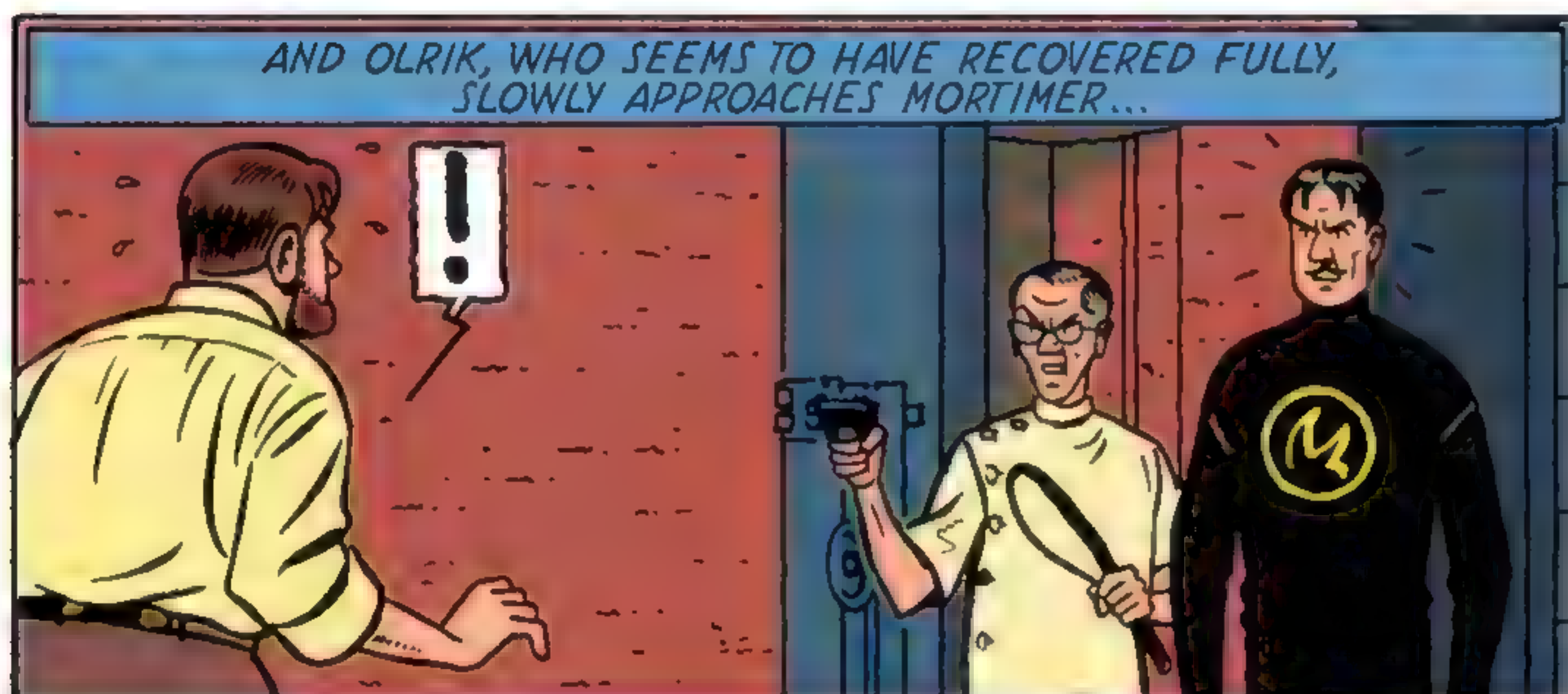
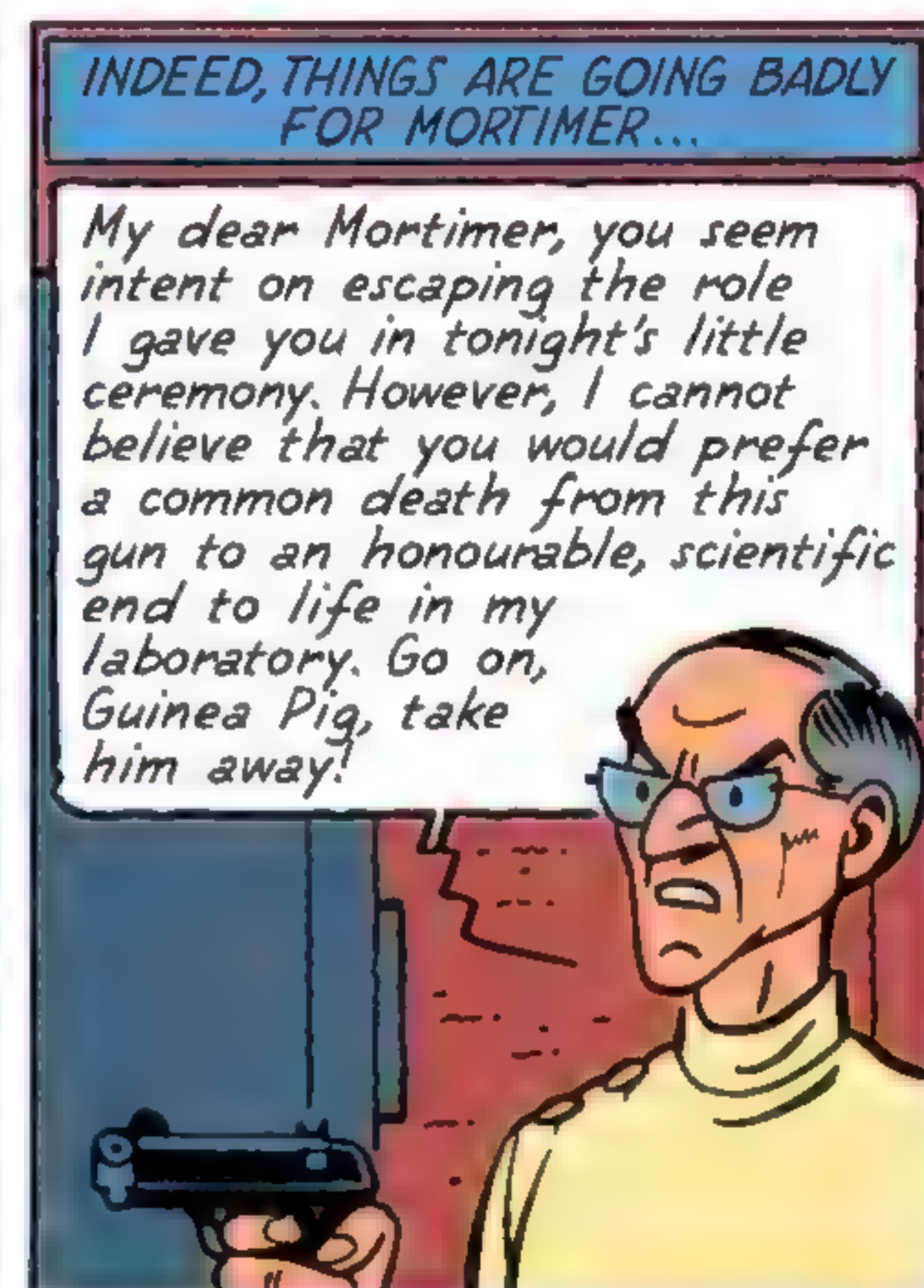
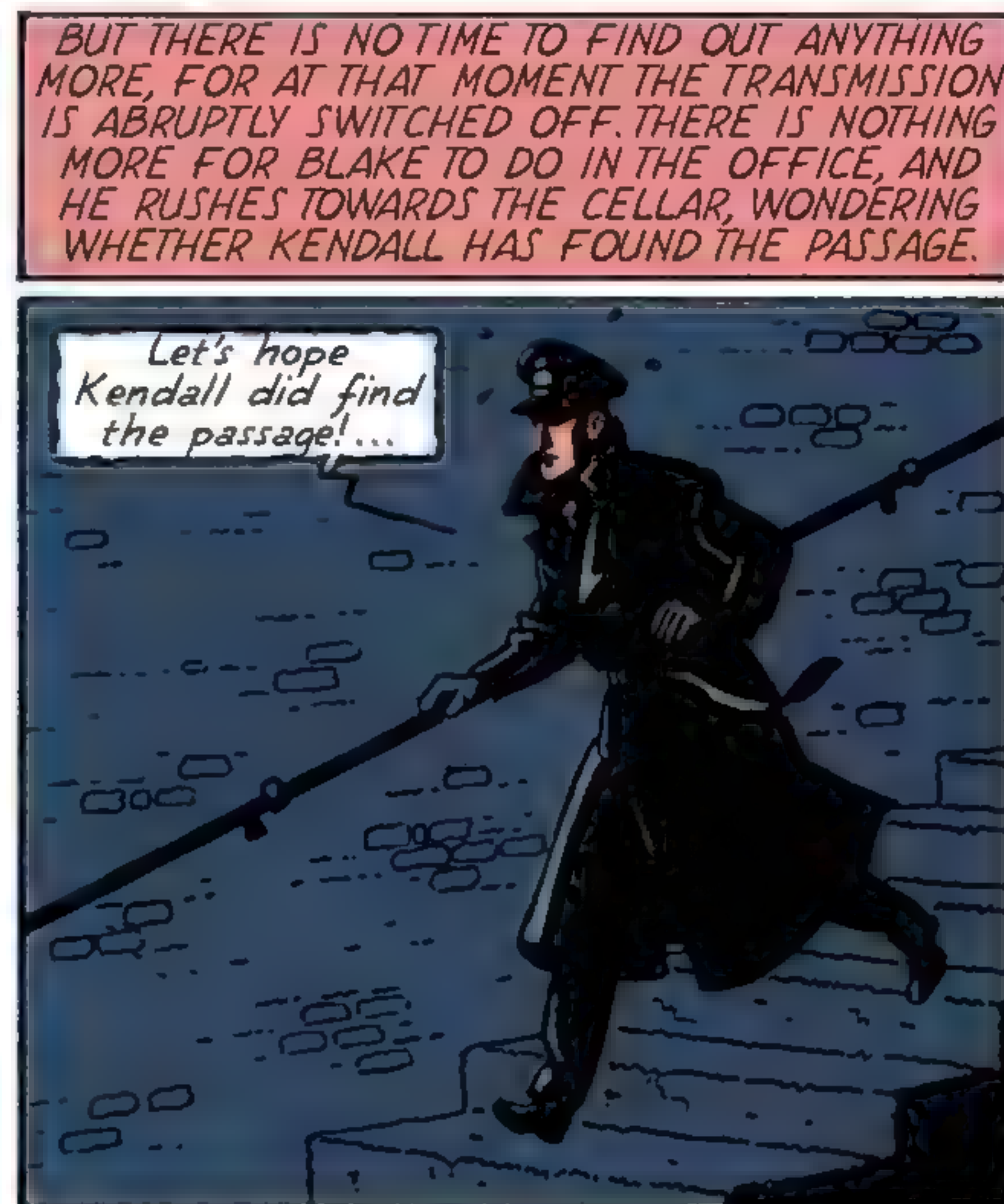
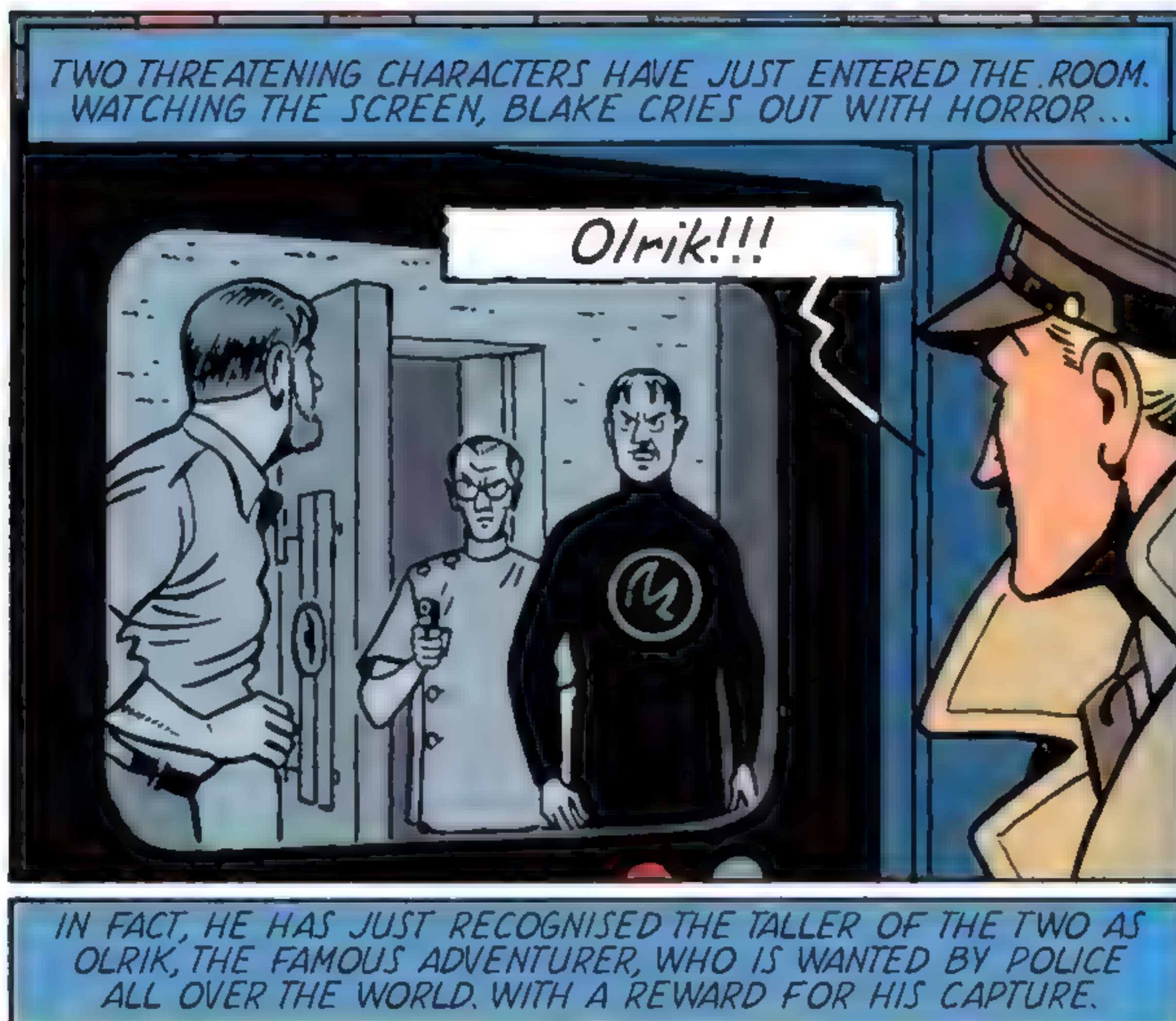


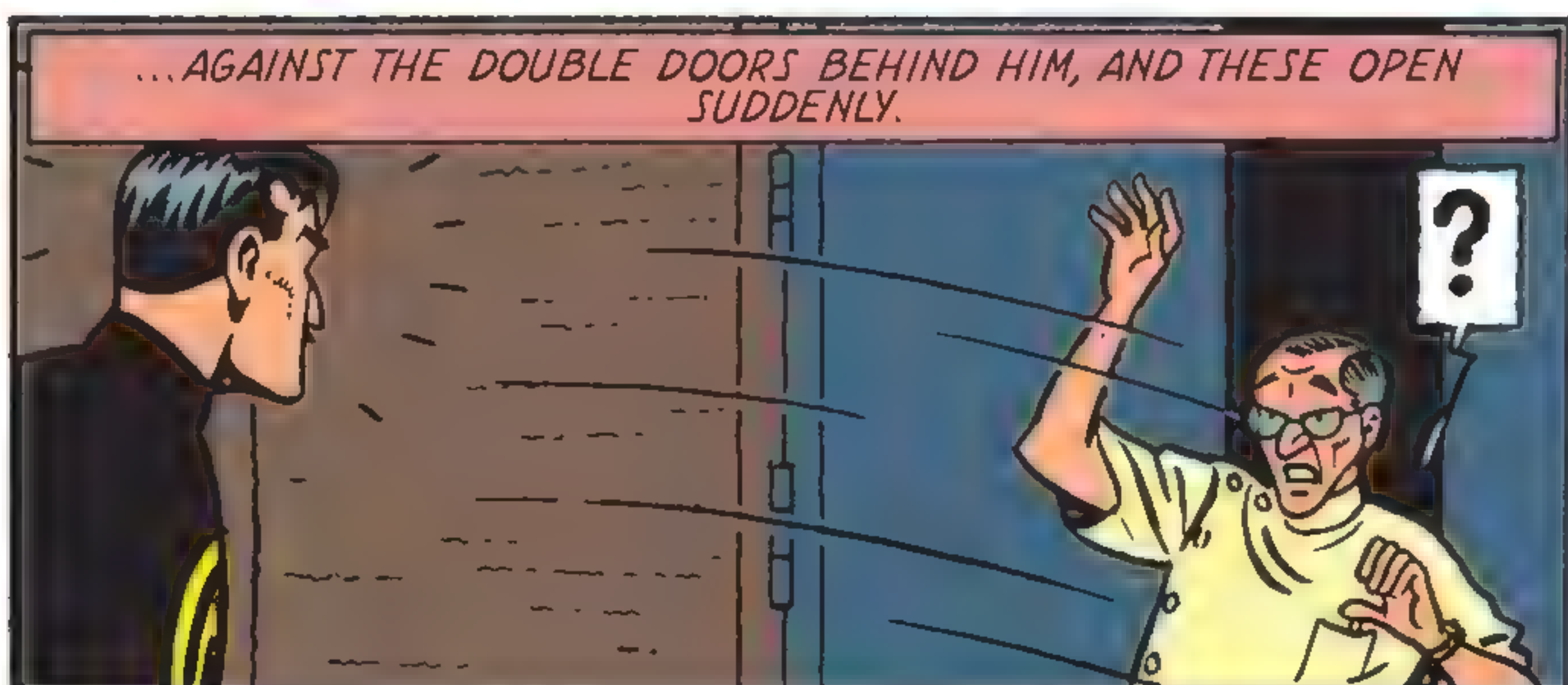
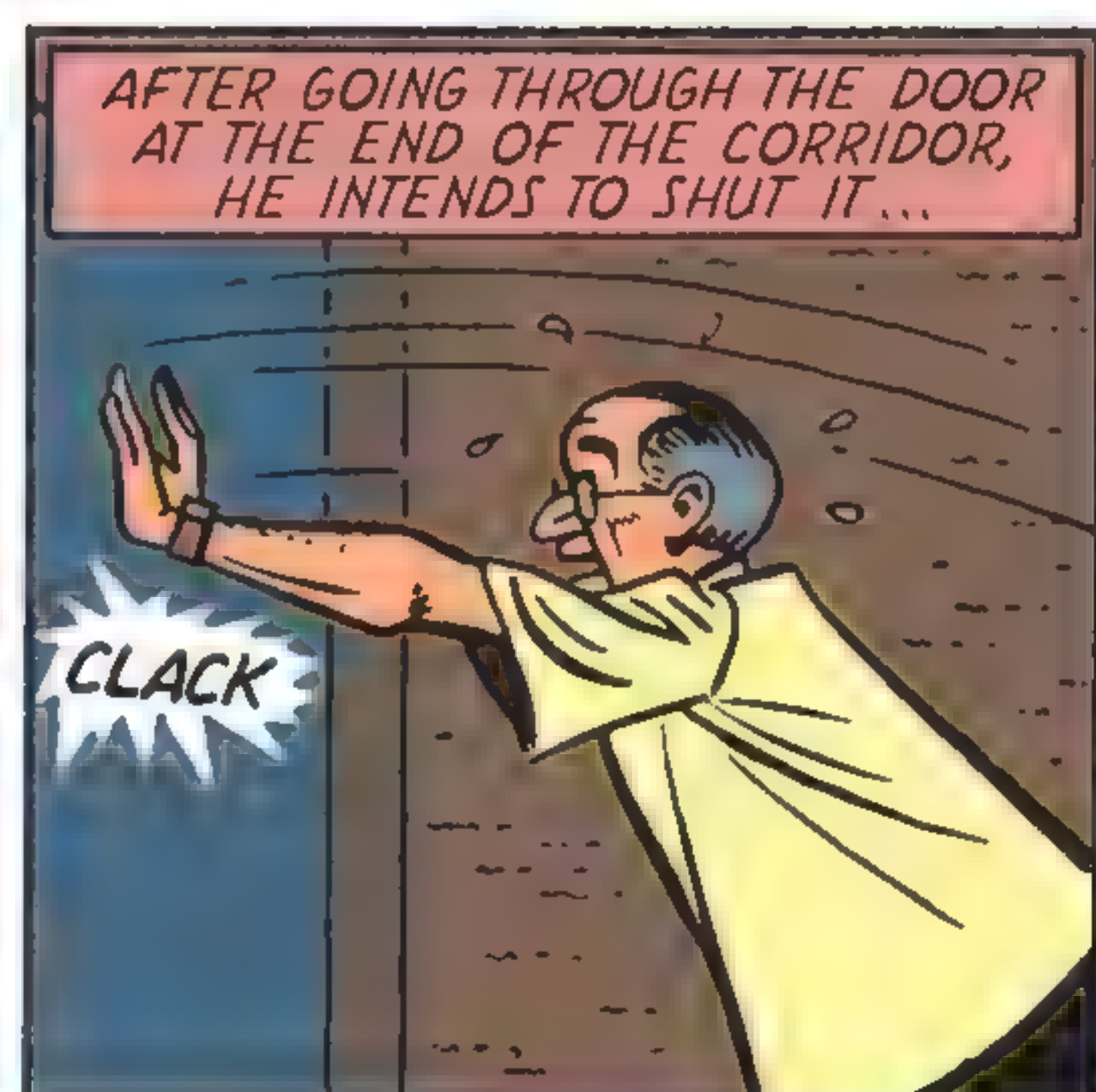
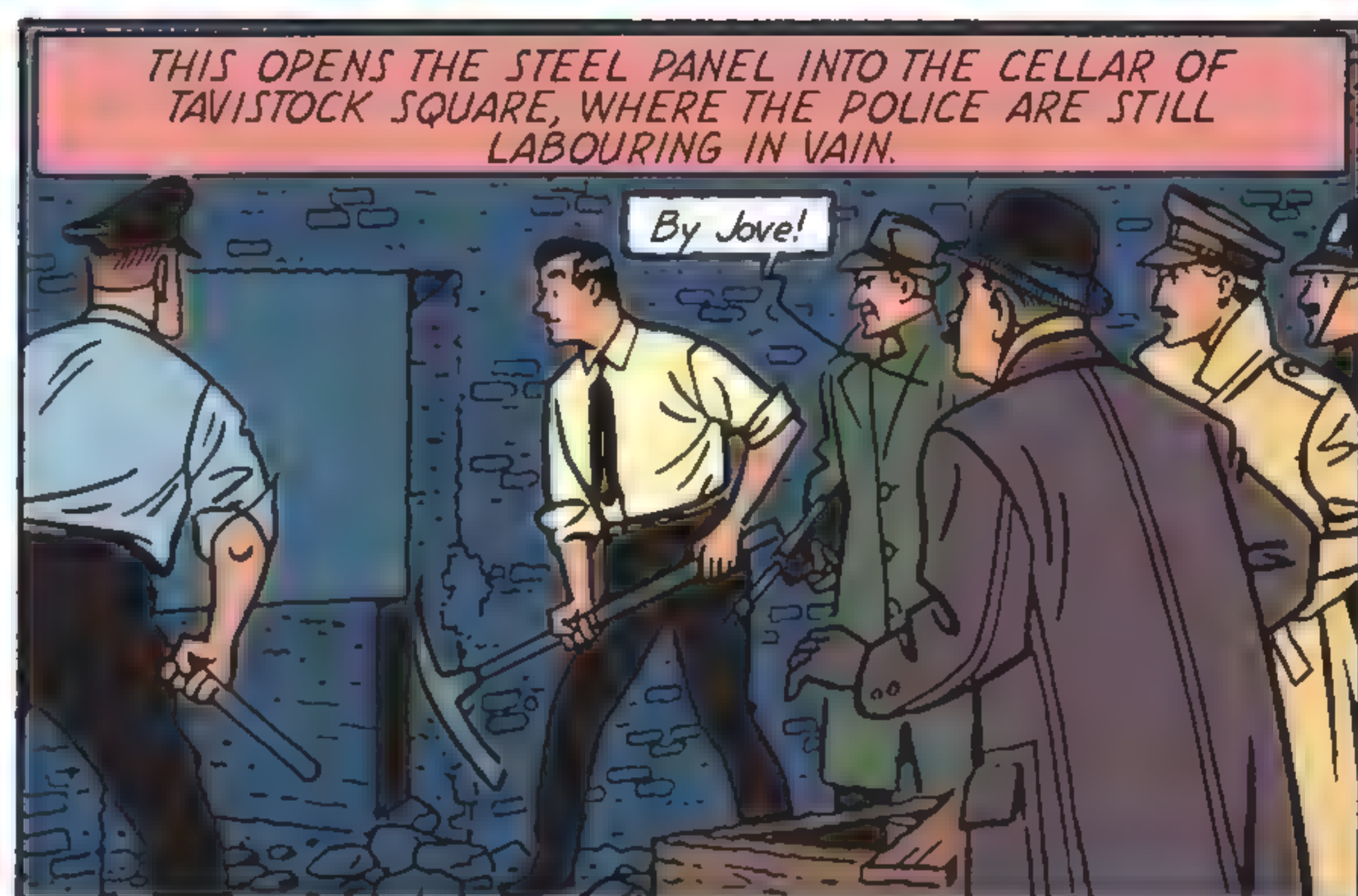
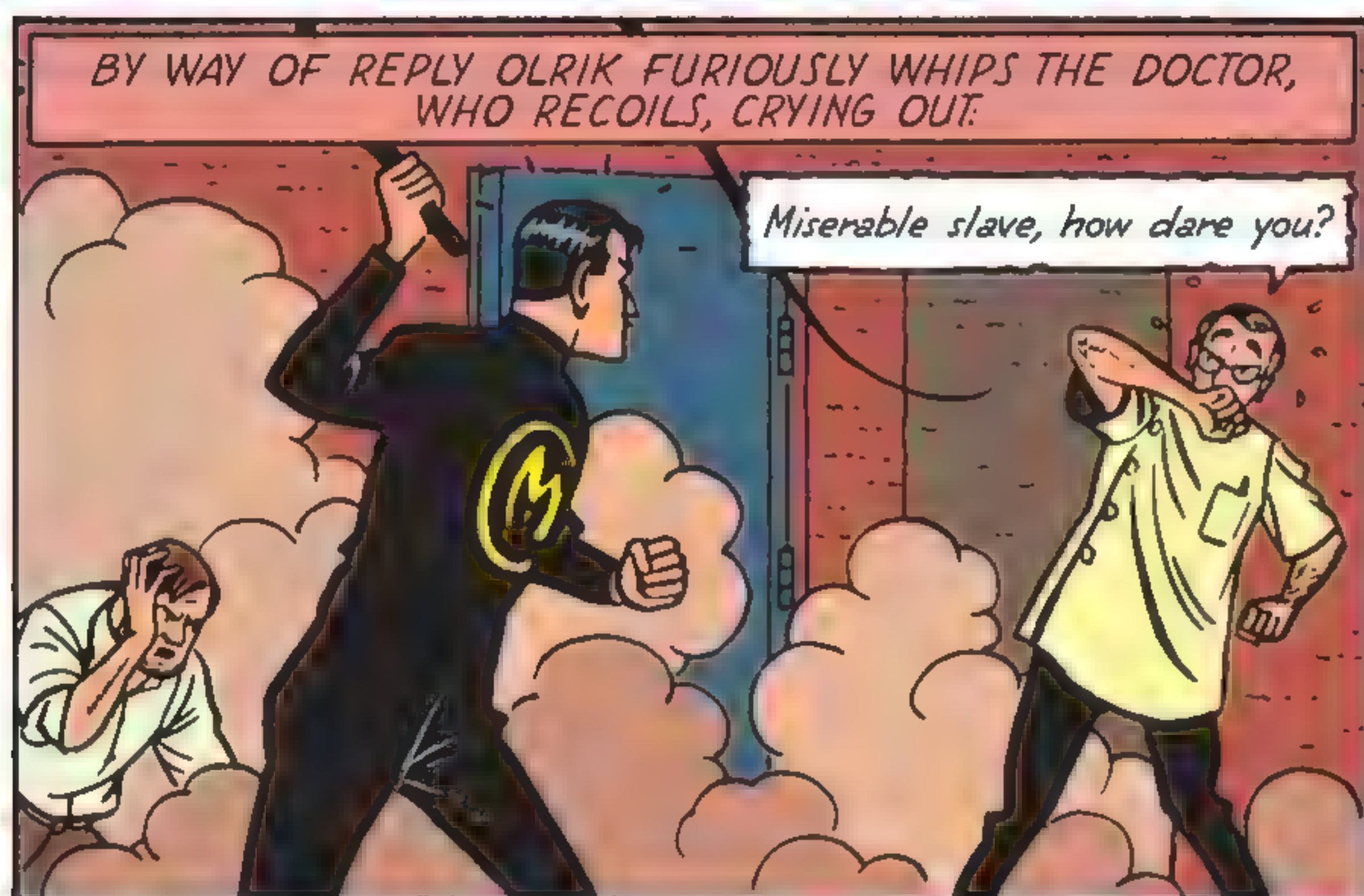
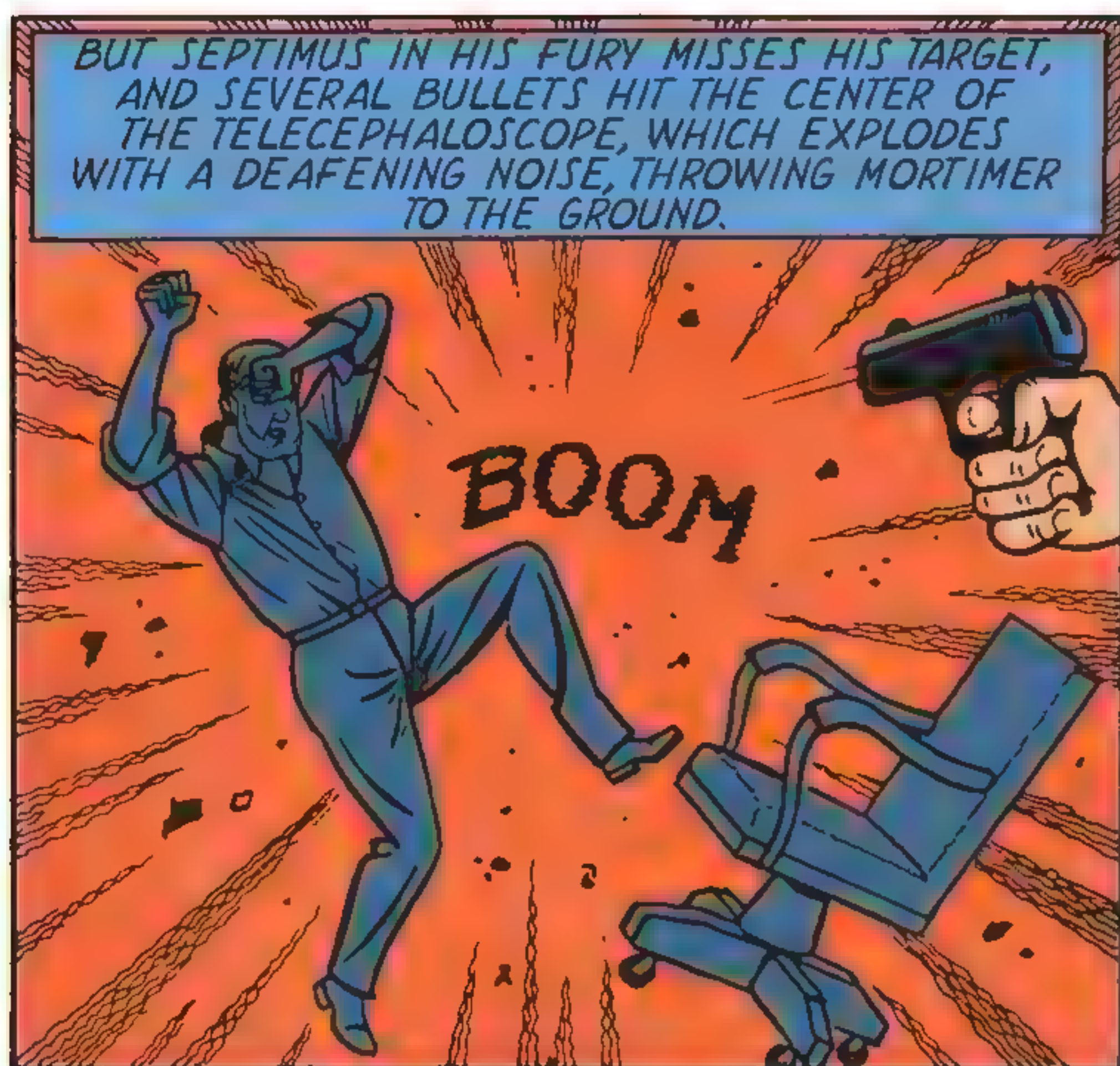
THE POLICE HAVE FORCED
THE DOOR AND ARE SPREADING OUT
IN THE HOUSE...

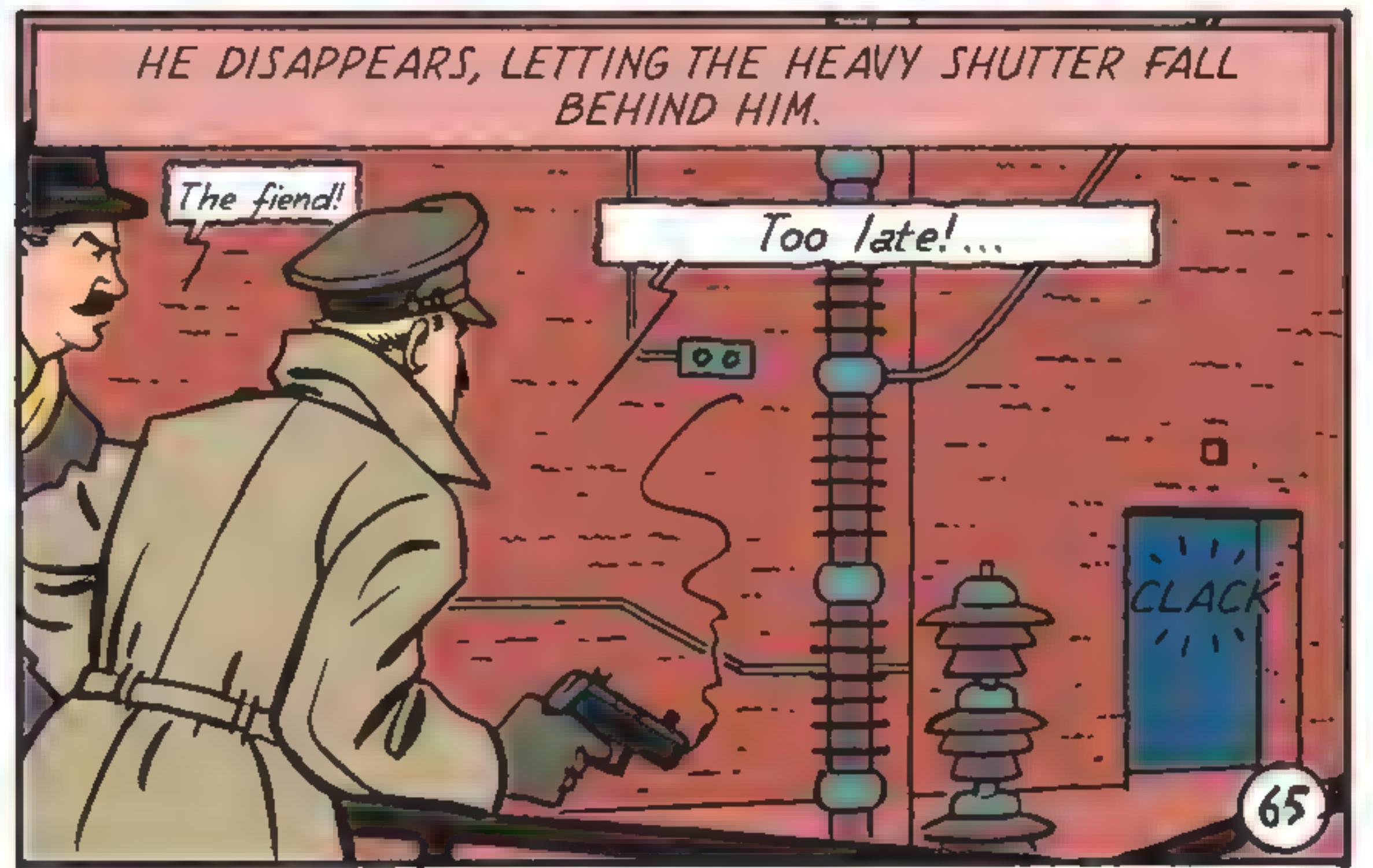
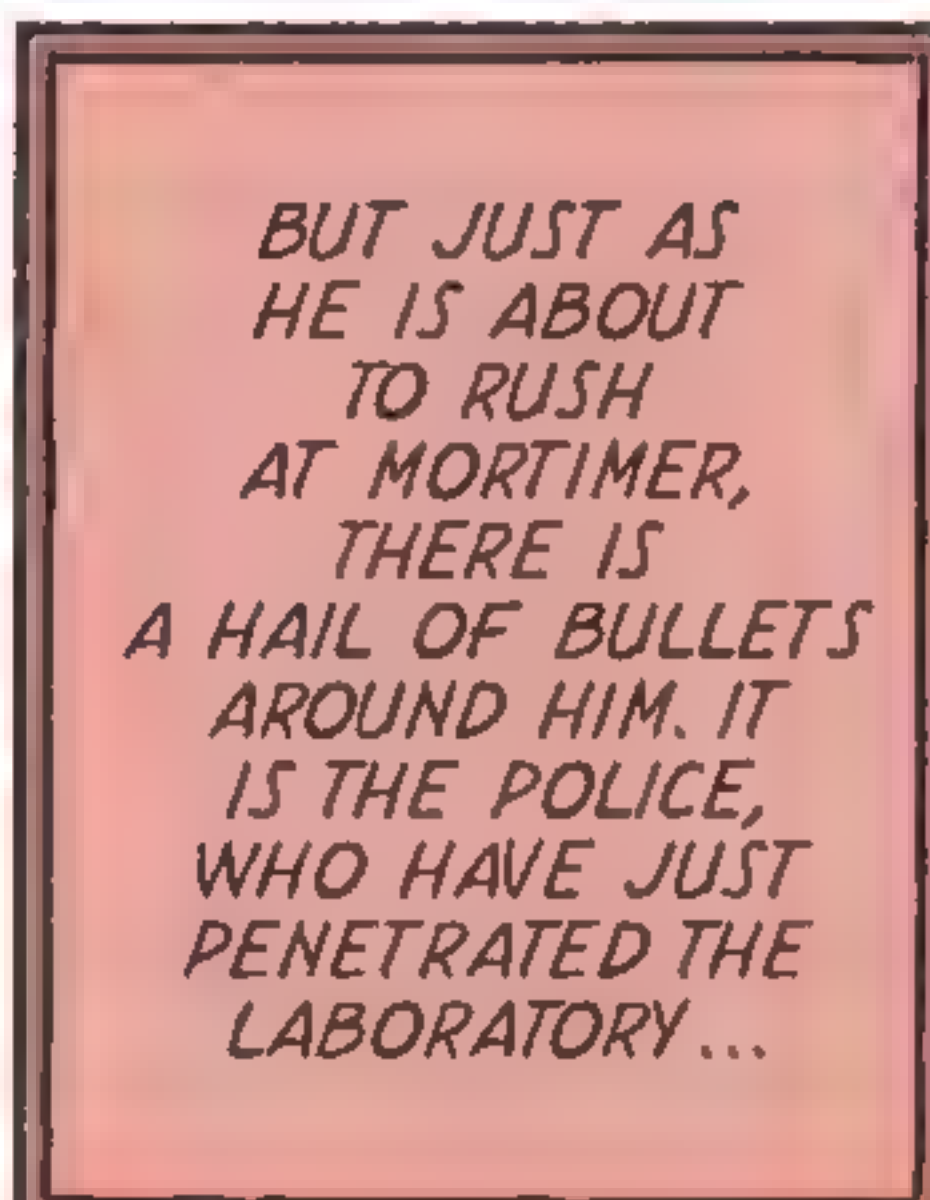
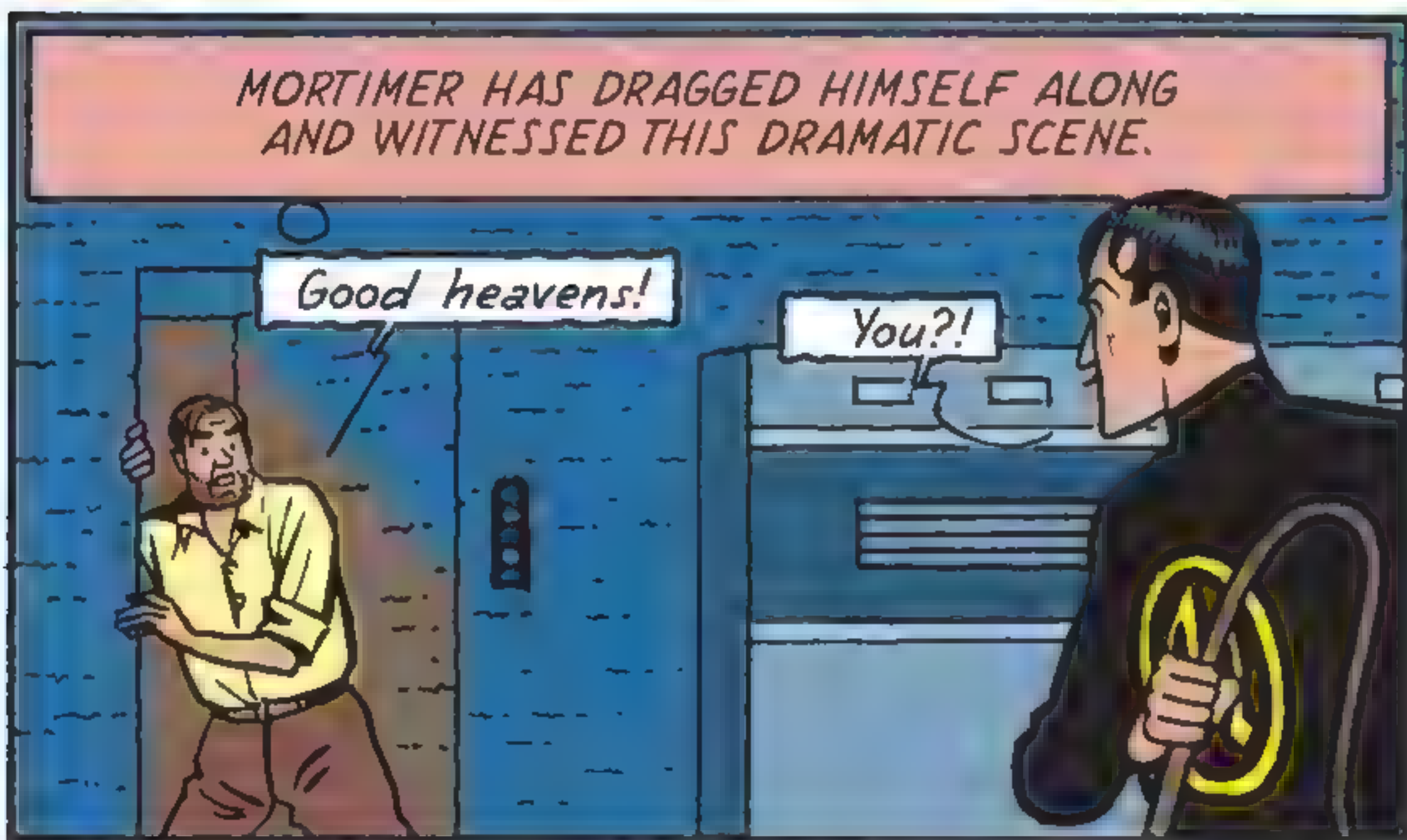
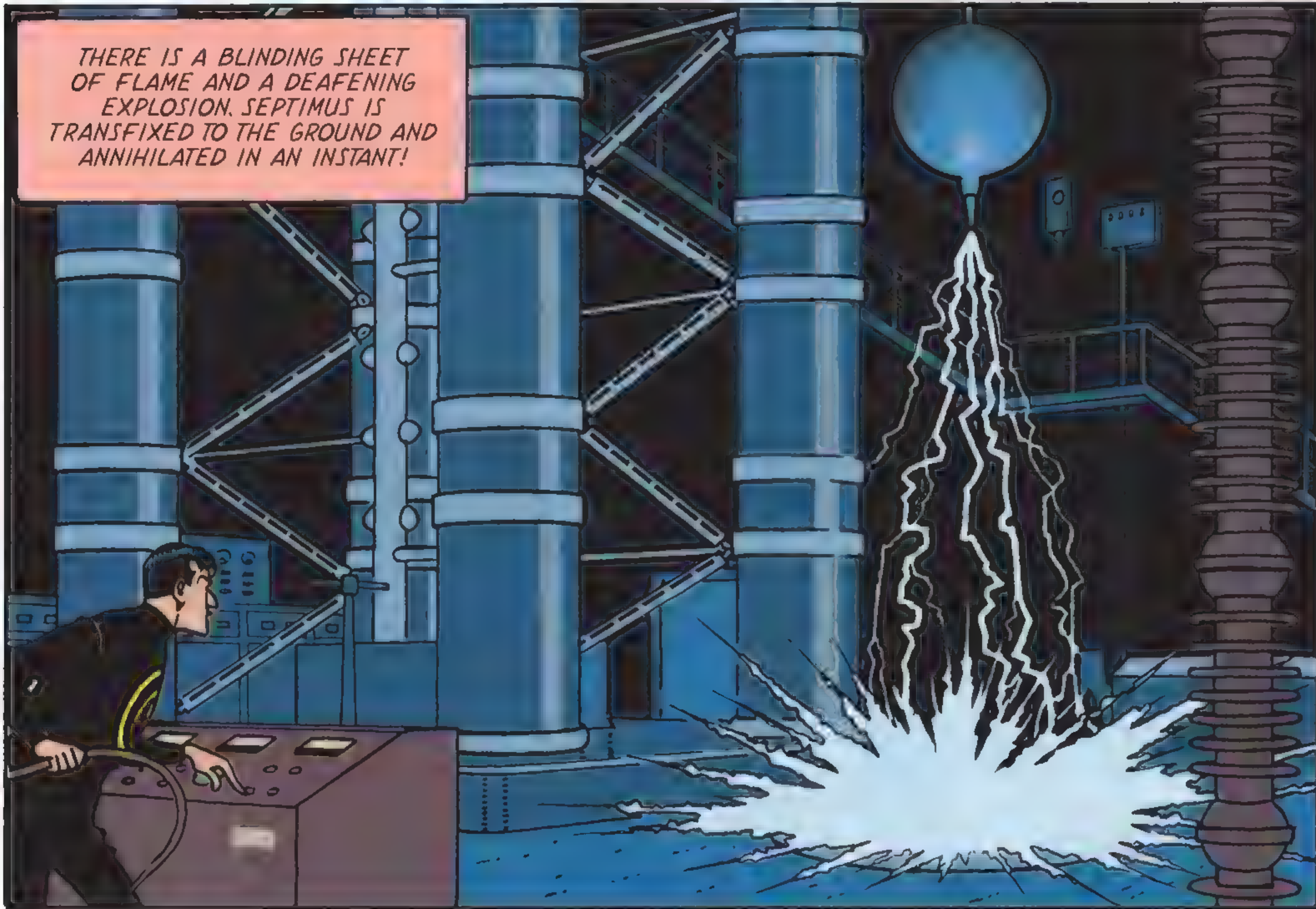
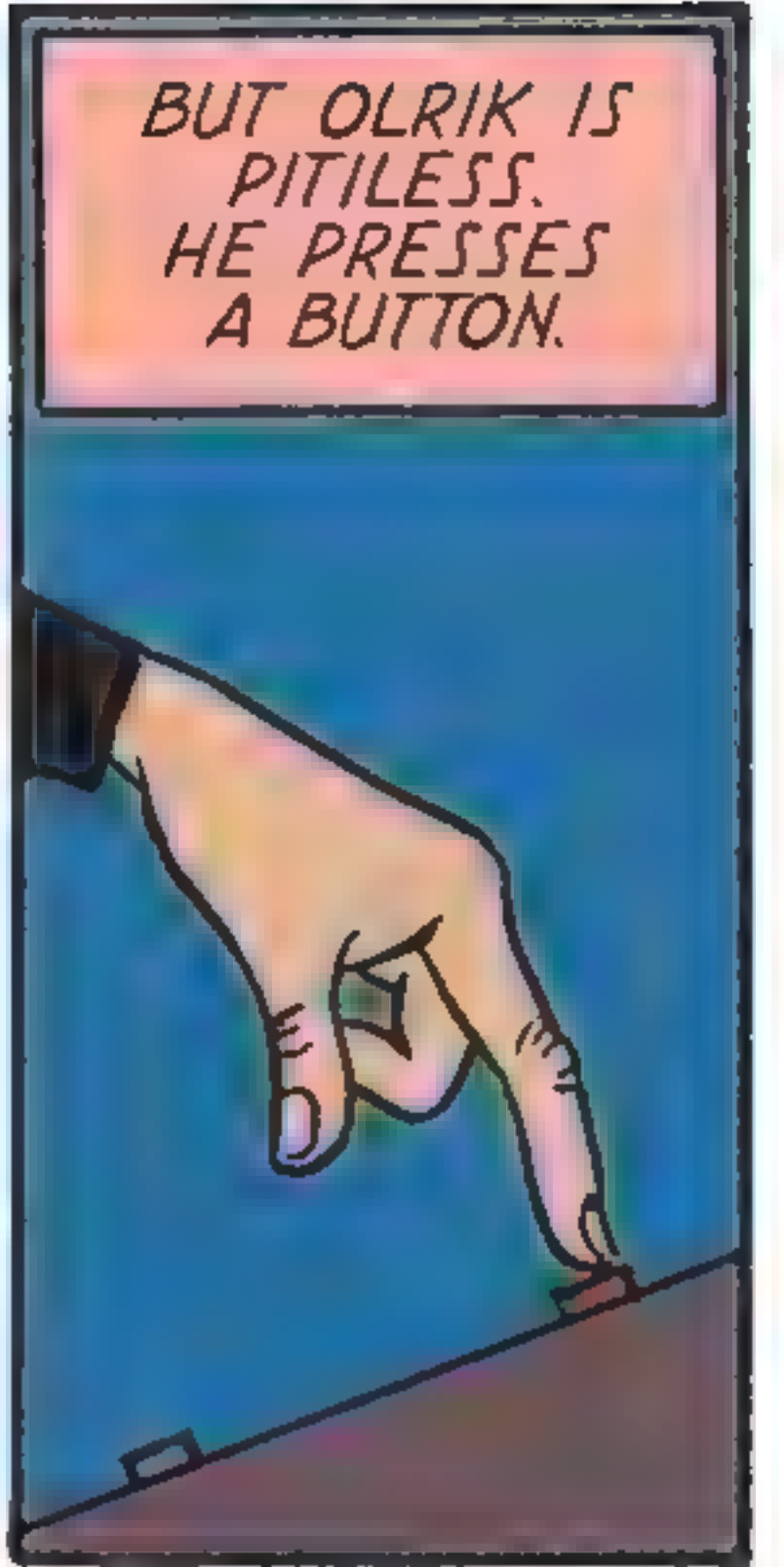
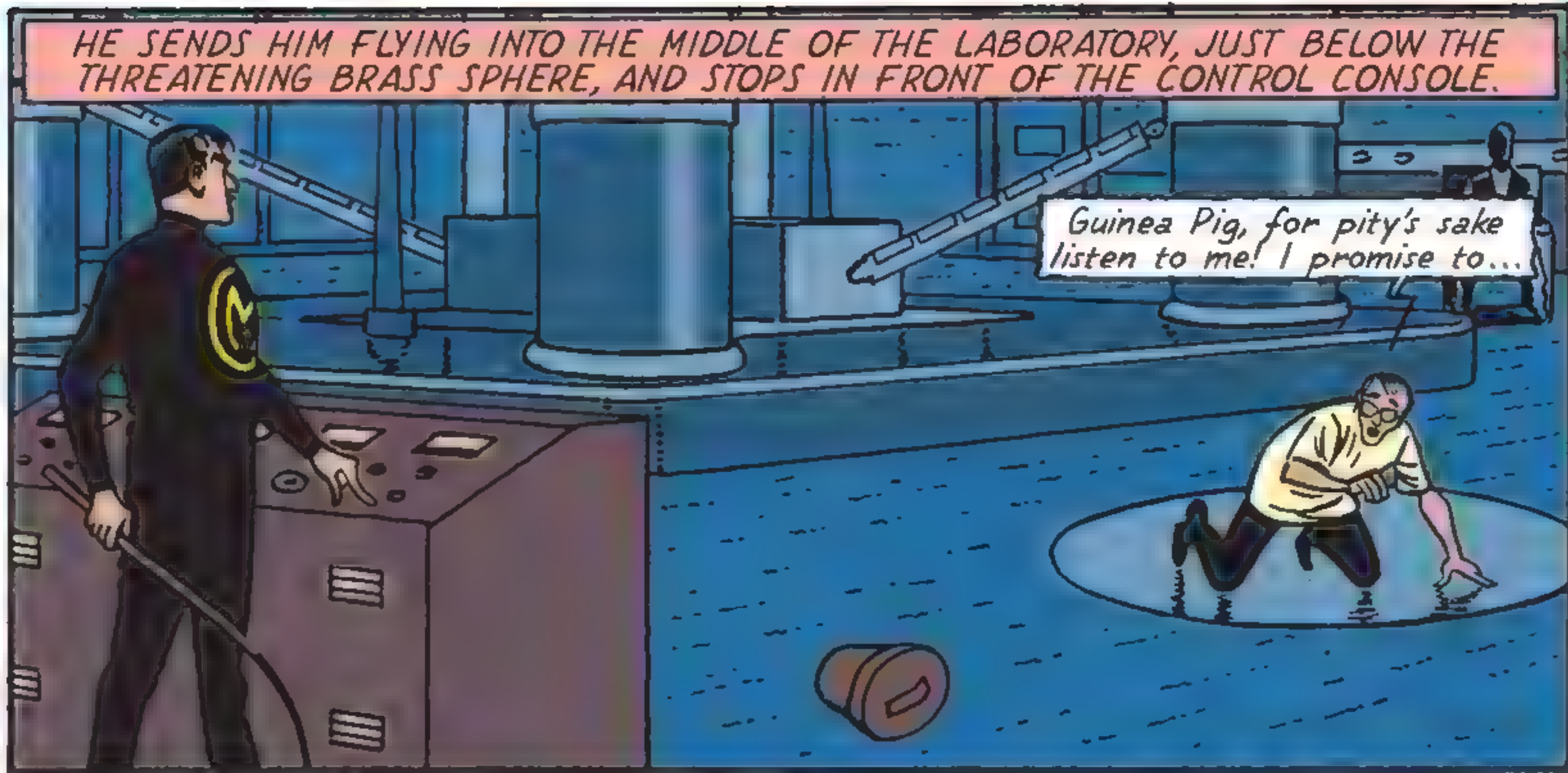
Search the whole place! Tap the
walls and floors! You and I, Kendall,
will see to the office.













AT THIS EXTRAORDINARY CLIMAX, BLAKE HAS THE LAST WORD: WELL, GENTLEMEN, OUR ADVENTURES FINISH HERE, EXCEPT FOR OUR OLD ENEMY OLRIK, WHOM WE WILL FINISH BY CATCHING ONE OF THESE DAYS. AS FOR DOCTOR SEPTIMUS, HIS EXCEPTIONAL GIFTS NO DOUBT INTENDED HIM TO OCCUPY A POSITION OF PRIME IMPORTANCE IN THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD OF THIS AGE. UNFORTUNATELY, SPITE, A DESIRE VENGEANCE, AND AN INORDINATE PRIDE CAUSED HIM TO DEVIATE FROM HIS ORIGINAL GOAL AND FINALLY LED TO HIS DOWNFALL. MAY HIS TRAGIC END SERVE AS A WARNING TO ALL WHO ARE TEMPTED, IN SERVING THEIR OWN CRIMINAL PURPOSES, TO FORGET THAT TRUE SCIENCE IS FOR THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY, THAT ITS AIM IS TO WORK FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PROGRESS AND NOT FOR THE VANITY, AMBITION OR TYRANNY OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL. AND, FINALLY, THAT MORE IMPORTANT THAN SCIENCE IS MAN HIMSELF. THAT SAID, GENTLEMEN, IT IS NOW MIDNIGHT. A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!!

THE END



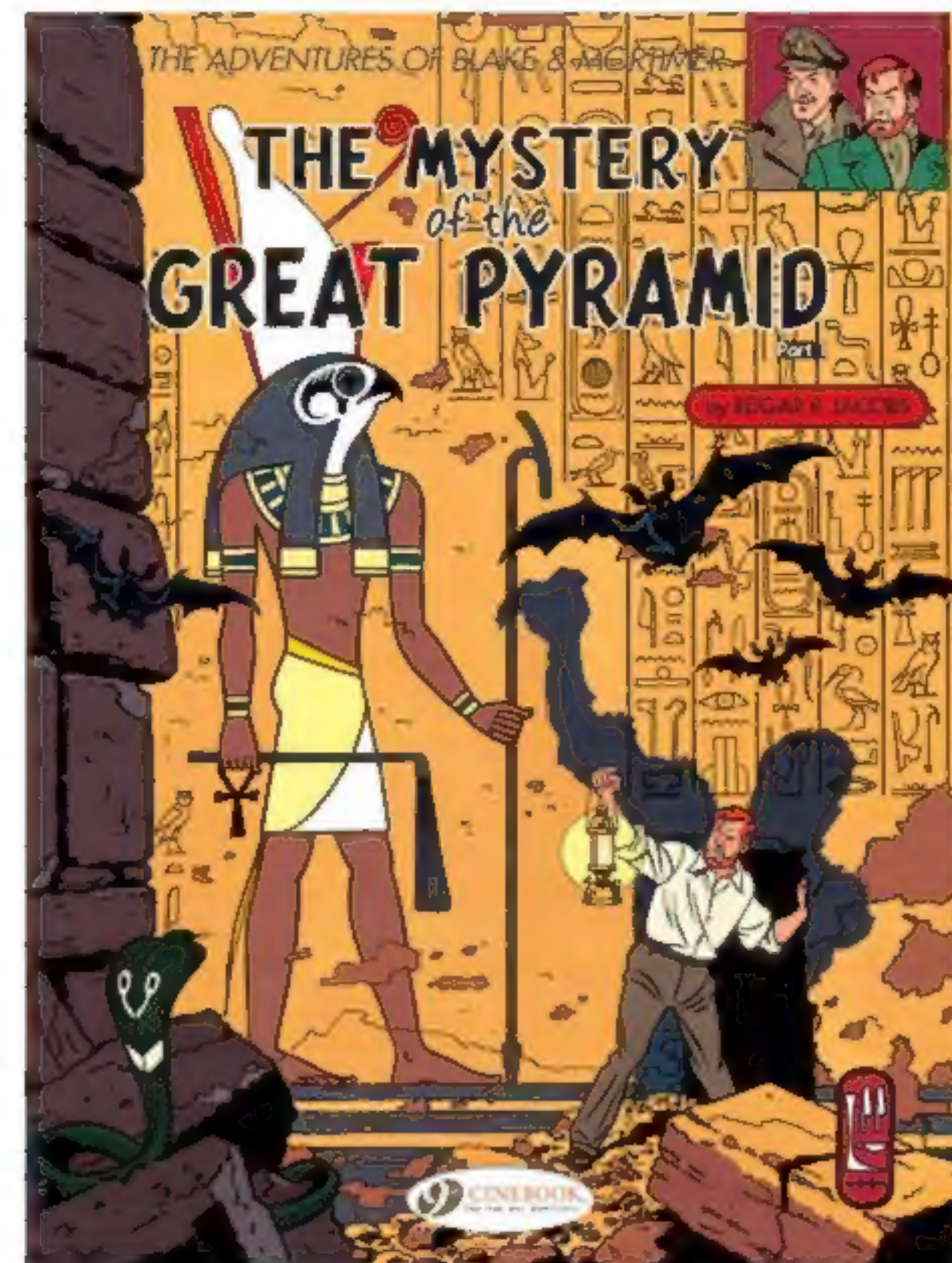
THE END



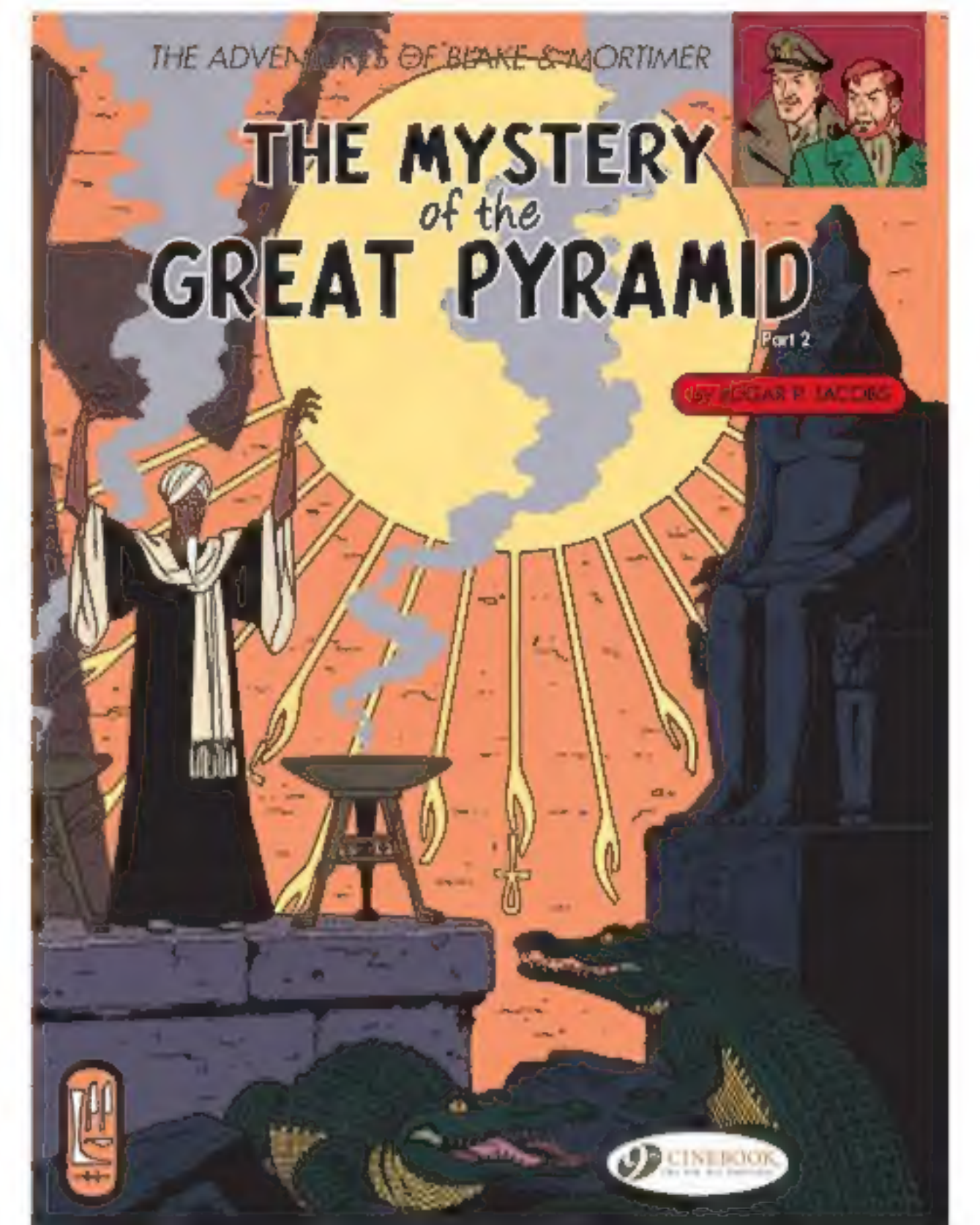
THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER



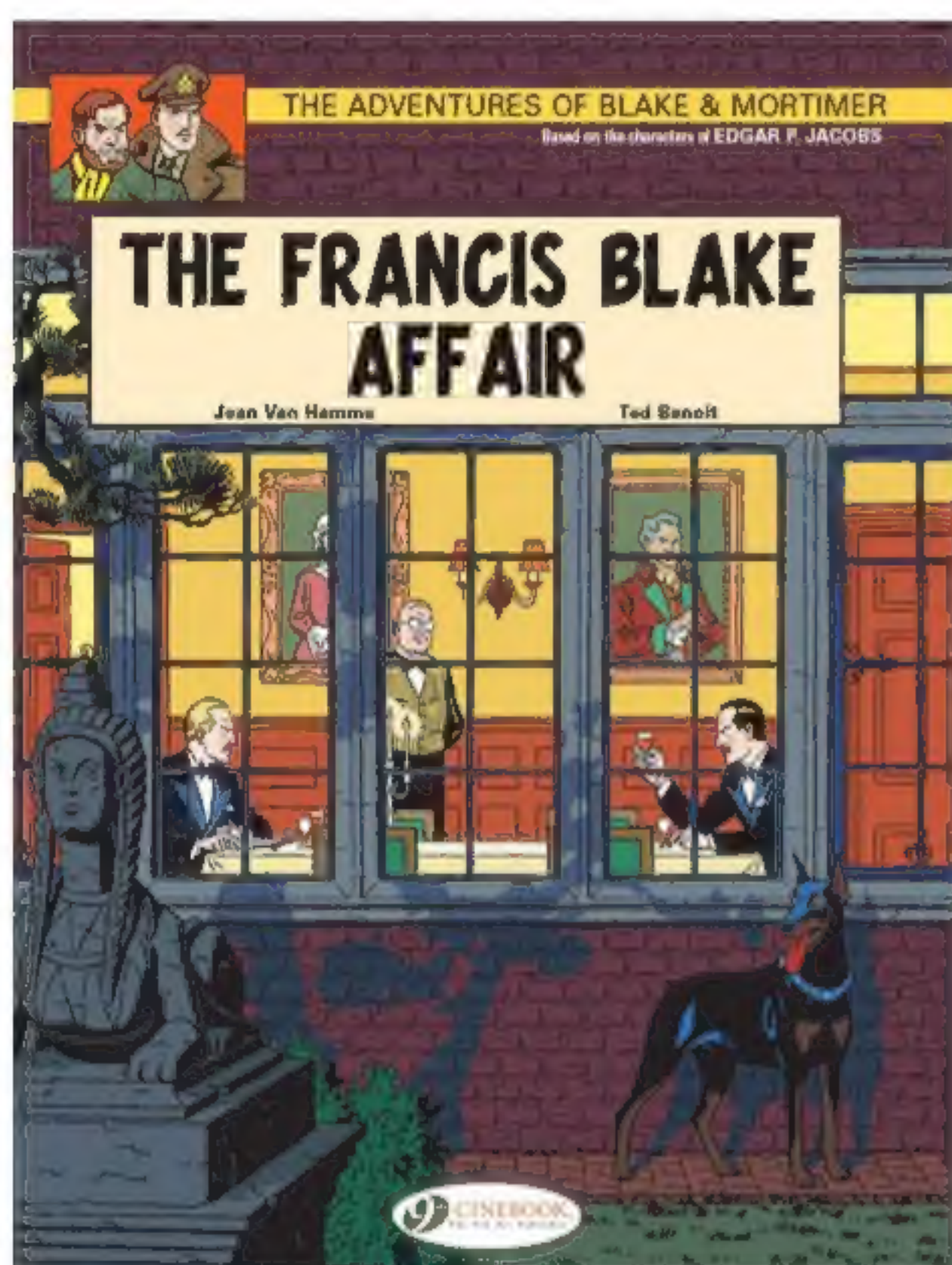
① The Yellow "M"
EDGAR P. JACOBS



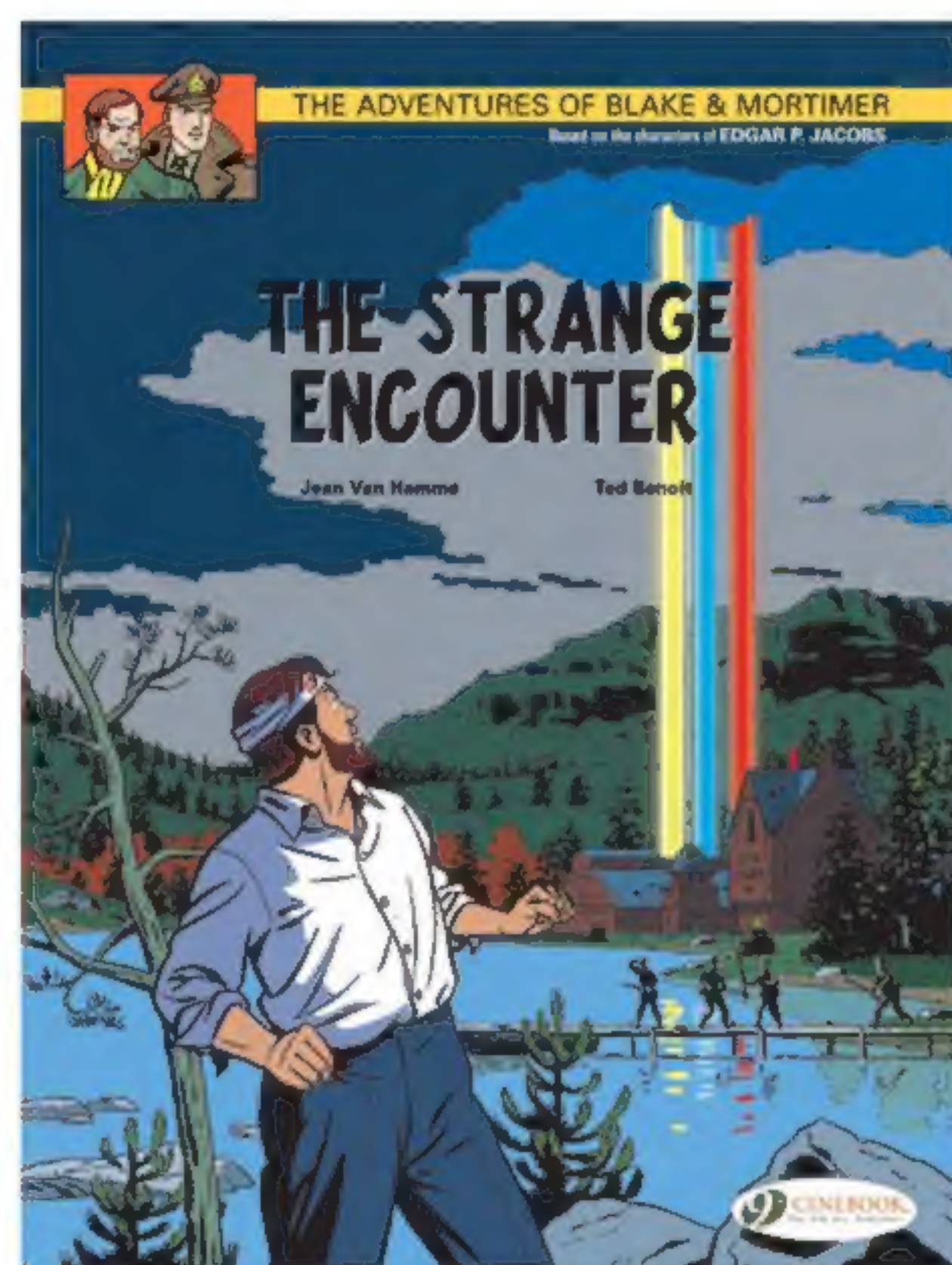
② The Mystery of the
Great Pyramid Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



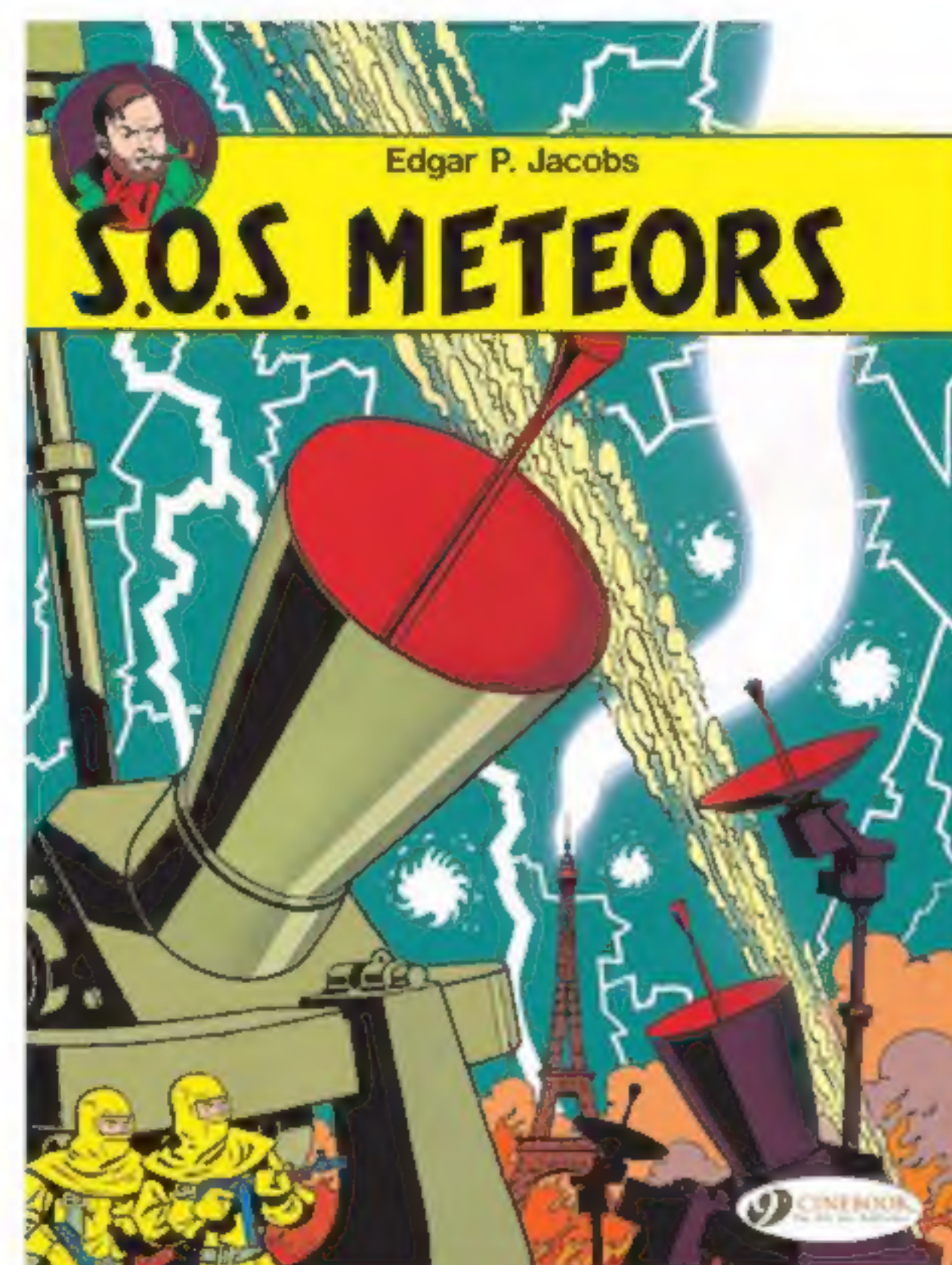
③ The Mystery of the
Great Pyramid Part 2
EDGAR P. JACOBS



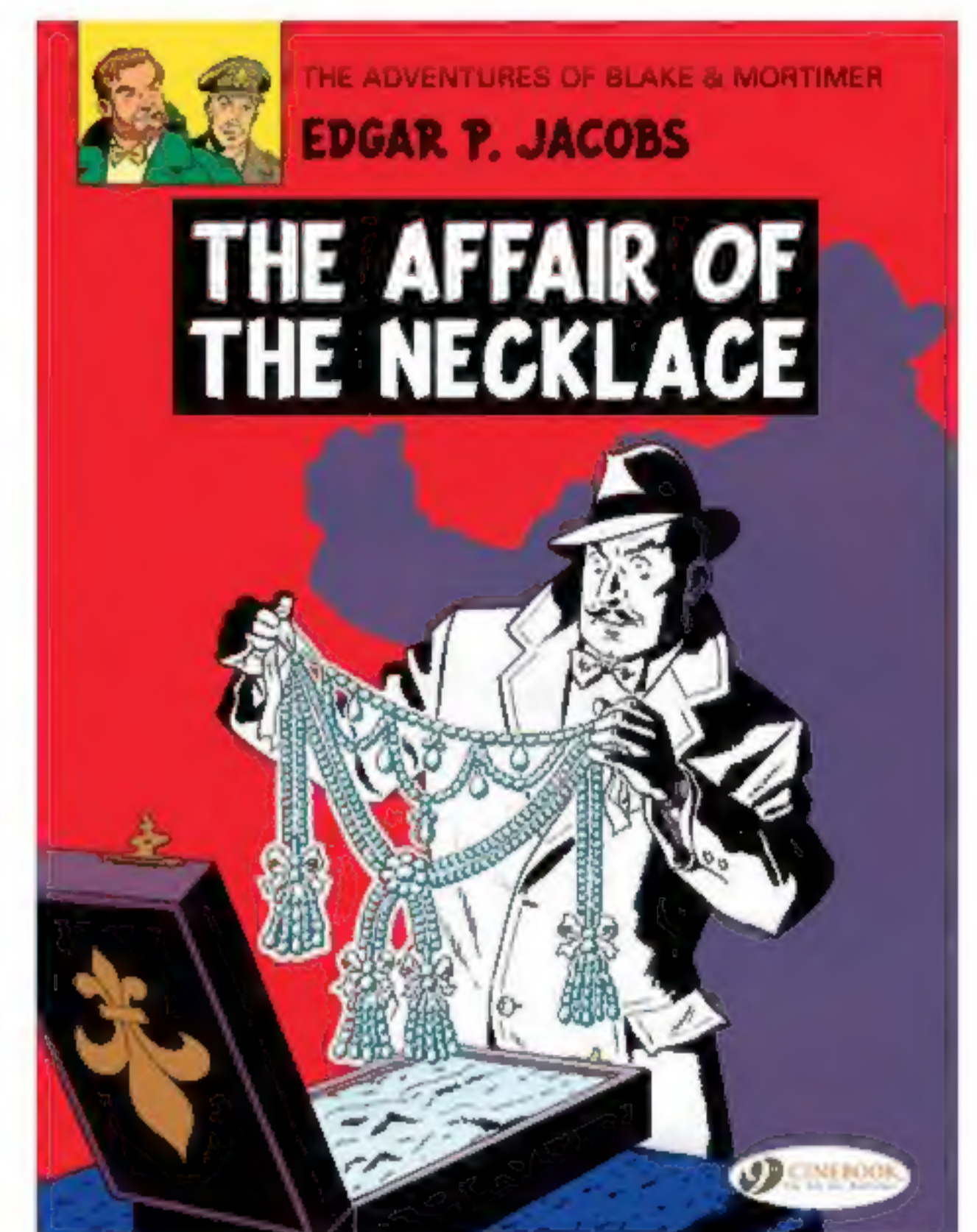
④ The Francis Blake Affair
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



⑤ The Strange Encounter
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



⑥ S.O.S. Meteors
EDGAR P. JACOBS



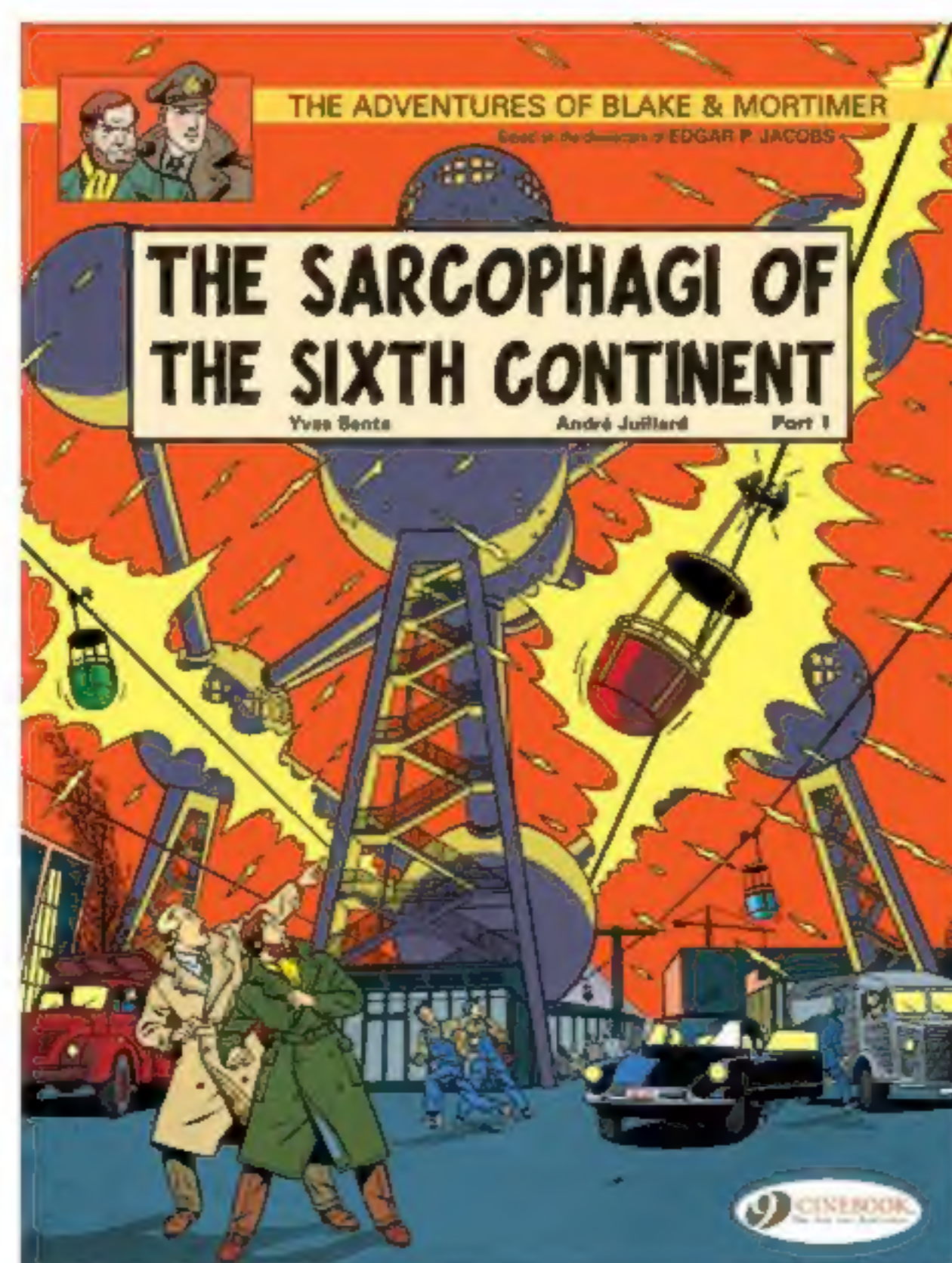
⑦ The Affair of the Necklace
EDGAR P. JACOBS

COMING SOON

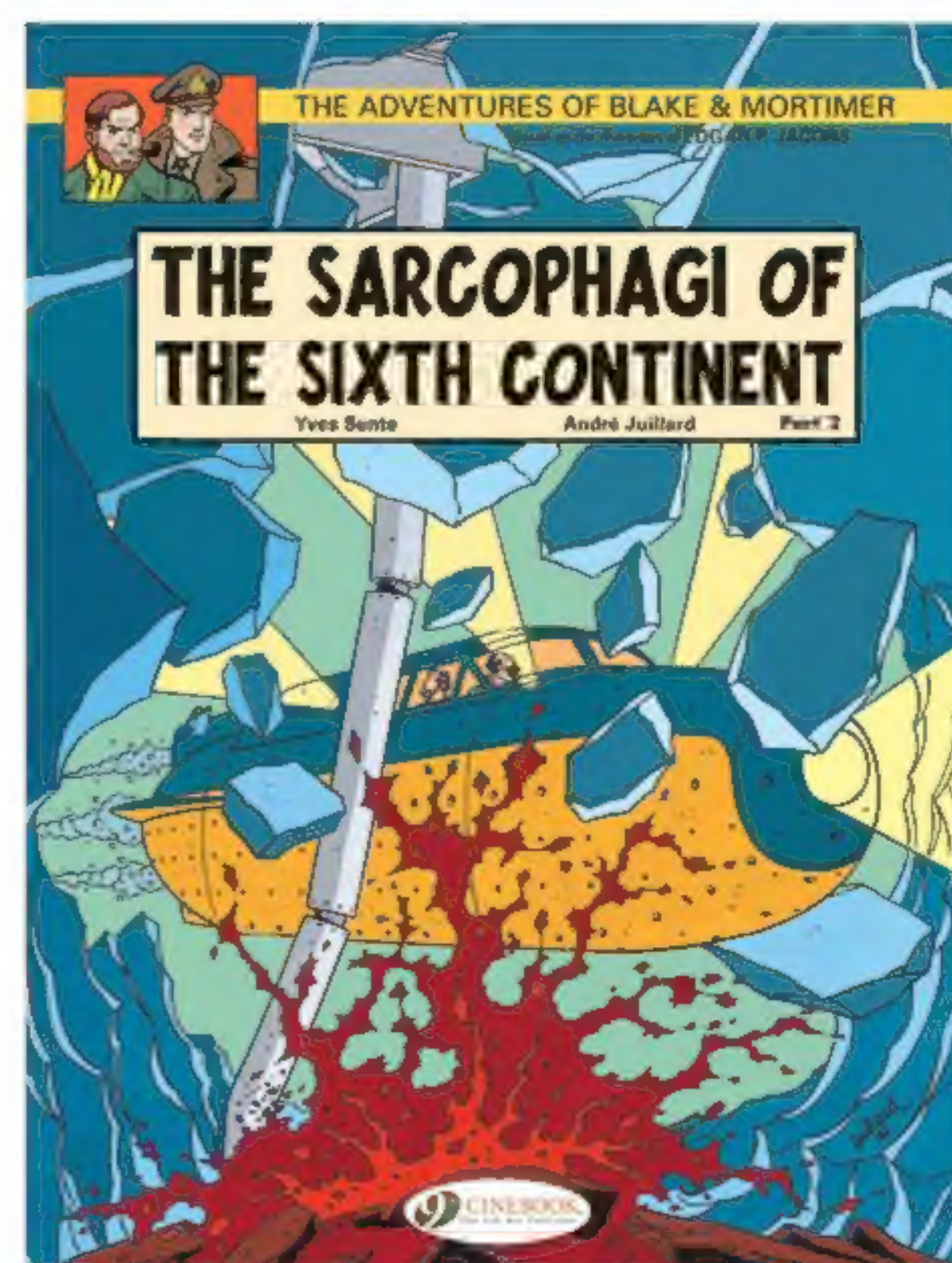
2011



⑧ The Voronov Plot
SENTE - JUILLARD



⑨ The Sarcophagi of
the Sixth Continent Part 1
SENTE - JUILLARD



⑩ The Sarcophagi of
the Sixth Continent Part 2
SENTE - JUILLARD



⑪ The Gondwana Shrine
SENTE - JUILLARD

Edgard Félix Pierre Jacobs (1904–1987), better known under his pen name Edgar P. Jacobs, was a comic book creator (writer and artist), born in Brussels, Belgium. It has been said of Jacobs that he didn't remember a time when he hadn't drawn.

Jacobs assisted fellow Belgian Hergé (Georges Prosper Remi) in the recasting of Hergé's *Tintin in the Congo*, *Tintin in America*, *King Ottokar's Sceptre* and *The Blue Lotus* for book publication. He also contributed directly to both the drawing and storylines for the Tintin double-albums *The Secret of the Unicorn/Red Rackham's Treasure* and *The Seven Crystal Balls/Prisoners of the Sun*.

When the comics magazine *Tintin* was launched on 26th September 1946, it included Jacobs' story *Le secret de l'Espadon* (*The Secret of the Swordfish*). This story would be the first in the Blake and Mortimer series.

The characters of Captain Francis Blake, dashing head of MI5, his friend Professor Philip Mortimer, a nuclear physicist, and their sworn enemy Colonel Olrik became legendary heroes of the 9th art in the long-running series.

After Jacobs' death in 1987, Bob de Moor completed his unfinished last story. In the mid-1990s, the series was continued by the Jacobs Studios with two teams of writers and artists: Van Hamme/Benoit and Sente/Juillard.



Volumes published in the Blake & Mortimer series:

1. 1950 - *Le Secret de l'Espadon, T1: The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 1*
2. 1953 - *Le Secret de l'Espadon, T2: The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 2*
3. 1953 - *Le Secret de l'Espadon, T3: The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 3*
4. 1954 - *Le Mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T1: The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 1 - Cinebook N°2 - 2007*
5. 1955 - *Le Mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T2: The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 2 - Cinebook N°3 - 2008*
6. 1956 - *La Marque Jaune: The Yellow "M" - Cinebook N°1 - 2007*
7. 1957 - *L'Énigme de l'Atlantide: Atlantis Mystery*
8. 1959 - *S.O.S. Météores: S.O.S. Meteors - Cinebook N°6 - 2009*
9. 1962 - *Le Piège diabolique: The Time Trap*
10. 1967 - *L'Affaire du Collier: The Affair of the Necklace - Cinebook N°7 - 2010*
11. 1971 - *Les trois Formules du Professeur Satō, T1: Professor Satō's Three Formulas, Part 1*
12. 1990 - *Les trois Formules du Professeur Satō, T2: Professor Satō's Three Formulas, Part 2*
13. 1996 - *L'Affaire Francis Blake (Van Hamme/Benoit): The Francis Blake Affair - Cinebook N°4 - 2008*
14. 2000 - *La Machination Voronov (Sente/Juillard): The Voronov Plot - Cinebook N°8 - 2010*
15. 2001 - *L'Étrange Rendez-Vous (Van Hamme/Benoit): The Strange Encounter - Cinebook N°5 - 2009*
16. 2003 - *Les Sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T1 (Sente/Juillard): The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 1*
17. 2004 - *Les Sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T2 (Sente/Juillard): The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 2*
18. 2008 - *Le sanctuaire du Gondwana (Sente/Juillard): The Gondwana Shrine*
19. 2009 - *La malédiction des 30 deniers (Van Hamme/Sterne/De Spiegeleer): The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver*

THE YELLOW "M"

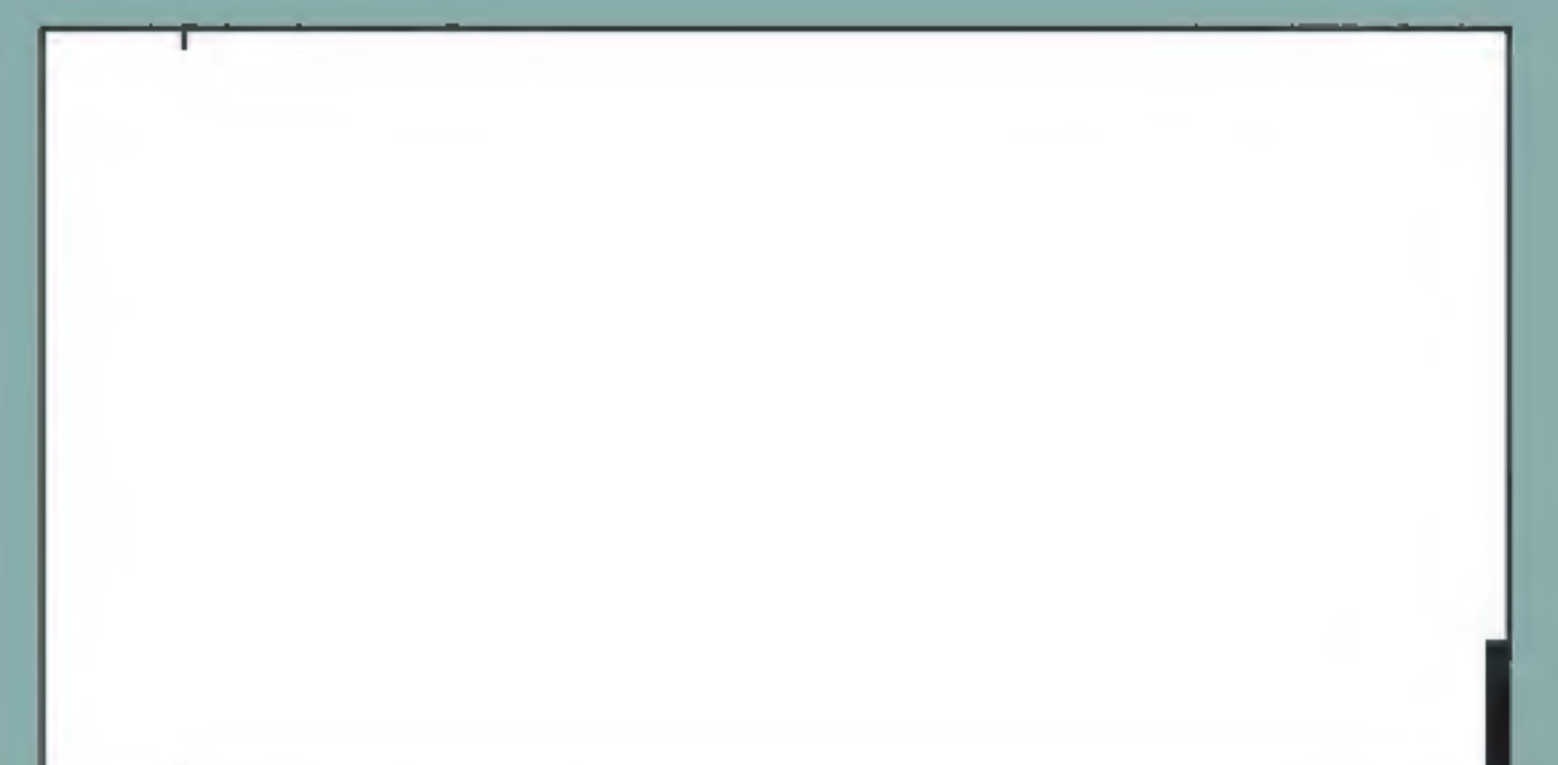
London's walls resound with the incredible exploits of the "Yellow Mark." The spectacular actions of this mysterious criminal are on the increase: holding up the Bank of England, robbing the imperial crown... No one seems able to stop him. He is so audacious that he lets the police know in advance where he will commit his crimes, each time ridiculing Scotland Yard a little more. The apparent ease with which he evades police schemes begins to worry the highest authorities of the country. The Home Office asks Captain Francis Blake to solve the mystery and discover the identity of the man who hides behind the Yellow Mark. The captain immediately takes as partner his old friend, Professor Philip Mortimer, whose scientific knowledge will be invaluable in solving this extremely complex enigma. Who hides behind the Yellow Mark?



E.P. JACOBS



EDGAR P. JACOBS - 1946





LYNX-EMPIRE